

**The British Masque**

1690-1800

Volume I

Michael Burden

Doct. of Philosophy



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**Acknowledgements**

The inspiration for this dissertation came from a 1950s recording I first discovered in 1980 of 'Rule Britannia' from the Aldeburgh Festival, purporting to be Arne's original version. I was then warned by friendly colleagues that the music of this period and genre was 'not very interesting'. This was the mildest remark which would be made about the topic over the next few years, and I would like to pay tribute to the late Michael Tilmouth, Tovey Professor of Music in the University of Edinburgh, who immediately saw the subject's potential, and supervised me with a firm hand, an unflinching wit and a superlative critical judgment. To David Kimbell and Roger Savage, who agreed to supervise the final stages of my work after Michael Tilmouth's death in 1987, I am greatly indebted. Their different viewpoints on the material have always been stimulating. David Kimbell's comments on the texts - 'Are you sure that is what these dreadful lines mean?!' - and his counsel on my musical discussion have been particularly valuable. Roger Savage provided many answers on obscure points: those who find it hard to imagine an event which might have inspired the writing and performing of Handel's *Acis and Galatea* in 1718, will find a marginal note in a draft of this thesis hypothesising the opening of a new aqueduct at Cannons Park. To him, I also owe more than I can say for the informal discussions we have had on opera and theatre, and for the general advice on academic matters which he has always given freely.

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Perhaps unusually in a dissertation of this kind, I would like to acknowledge the help, assistance and support of the members of The Scottish Masking Company. From 1985 to 1989, the singers were the subject of my experimentation, the orchestra, under Christopher Bell, suffered under the continual necessity to read handwritten parts of peculiar music, and the Company's director, Bridget Biagi, had her work shaped by my outlandish ideas. The Company's co-operation has been invaluable, and the productions, always a delight, have taught me great deal about the masque form. It was the foresight, translated into cash, of the Scottish Arts Council that enabled the Scottish Masking Company to perform *The Four Seasons or Love in Every Age*, and its second production of Boyce's *Secular Masque*. Above all, I owe a debt to Alasdair Nicolson, the former Shaw-McFie-Lang Fellow in the Faculty of Music at the University of Edinburgh. It was with his encouragement that I embarked, originally reluctantly, and then with enthusiasm, on the masque productions which proved so enlightening in the writing of this dissertation.

Michael Burden  
New College Oxford  
1991

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I do not speak here of those  
Inventions which owe their Birth  
merely to Chance, and wherewith it  
may honour the greatest Blockhead in  
the World; I only speak of those that  
required some meditation and effort  
of spirit.

*Pierre Anthony Motteux*  
The Gentleman's Journal, 1692

I have a tale to tell, as shall cause  
each particular hair to shoot through  
your hat; if you happen to sit  
covered when you hear it...

*David Garrick to Charles Dibdin*  
13 July 1772

Theses don't develop like plants or  
trees, but are usually jerry-built.

*Michael Tilmouth to Julia Wood*  
1987

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# UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

## ABSTRACT OF THESIS (Regulation 3.5.10)

Name of Candidate .....MICHAEL JOHN BURDEN.....  
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This thesis is a consideration of the theatre masque in Britain from the appearance of Dramatick Opera in 1690, to the end of the eighteenth century. Its central hypothesis is that those years which saw the greatest number of masques presented, also saw attempts to create an English operatic tradition, and that the subsequent brief popularity of the masque was a consequence of this activity.

The study falls into three sections. The first part, 'Definitions' considers the application of the word 'masque', in both primary and secondary discussions and studies; it also considers the problem of *Acis and Galatea* as a case study in theatrical terminology in the eighteenth century.

In the second section, 'Directions', there are three main chapters (ii, iv and vi), with two interludes (iii and v). Sections ii, iv and vi each take one of the quantitatively identified groups of masques (those of 1701, 1715-16 and 1733-4), and discusses their relation to the operatic and theatrical activity which was taking place at the time. Each of the interludes contains a short consideration of the genre which was an off-shoot of the masques previously discussed. Thus the masque burlesque follows the classical masque, and the pantomime masque follows the pastoral masque.

The third and final part is a study of the masque of *Alfred*, of its dramatic, political and musical characteristics, of those who worked on it and those who watched it, of those who altered it and those who revived it.

The thesis has five appendices: Garrick's alterations for *Alfred* in 1773; a transcription of production notes and stage directions for *Alfred* in 1773; Political allegory in the *Secular Masque*; Robert Adam, De Louthembourg and the sets for *The Maid of the Oaks*; and a catalogue of masques written between 1690 and 1800, which has its own introduction, critical apparatus, key and indices, and can be used as a discrete index.

The first volume contains the main text, while the second consists of the tables, musical examples, footnotes and bibliography, followed by the five appendices.

## Introduction

The masque before the Commonwealth has been well served by scholars. Attracted by the superb drawings of Inigo Jones - most of which survive in the collection housed at Chatsworth - and by the equally superb and fascinating texts by Ben Jonson, they have undertaken a series of studies of meaning and method illustrated by the texts, of the costumes and stage designs shown in the drawings, and of the layout and ordering of musicians demonstrated by floor plans.<sup>1</sup> No such material survives for any masque after 1639, apart from accounts for John Crowne's *Calisto*.<sup>2</sup> Some of the few masques that were presented during the Commonwealth were considered by Percy A. Scholes in his volume *The Puritans and Music*, published in 1934, but despite studies of individual works, the genre has not been examined since.<sup>3</sup>

The first major study of a Restoration masque appeared as early as 1932, when Elizabeth Boswell published her detailed study of the masque of *Calisto*, under the title of *The Restoration Court Stage*.<sup>4</sup> The volume was a milestone for it considered the history of the theatre, it analysed the accounts revealing information about the maintenance of the theatre and aspects of the production, and it published bills and lists of payments relating to both the theatre in general, and the production of *Calisto* in particular. It has a variety of illustrations, which are now familiar to modern readers, but the rather fanciful costume watercolours would not now be

acceptable as designs based on the available evidence, and it seems an obvious lacuna that the one picture omitted - that in the Royal Collection by Peter Lely of Princess Mary as Diana - is the one piece of really useful pictorial evidence for the entire period.<sup>5</sup>

One of the most helpful passages on the late seventeenth-century masque and its origins is in Maryann Cale McGuire's *Milton's Puritan Masque* of 1983.<sup>6</sup> This has a short section, Appendix A, which places the Commonwealth and Restoration masques in context.

Apart from Anthony Lewis's 1963 discussion of the relationship between Purcell and Blow in *Music and Letters*, there is surprisingly little commentary on Blow's *Venus and Adonis*.<sup>7</sup> P. A. Hopkin's recent discovery, which Richard Lockett communicated to the public through an article in the *Musical Times* in 1989, raised a variety of questions concerning Josias Priest's school, but none of these can be answered until the rest of the associated documents are made available.<sup>8</sup> Neal Zaslaw's brief consideration of the school masque in the *Musical Times* in 1977, concentrated on the performance of *Orpheus and Euridice* at the Besselsleigh School in 1697, shedding light on several forgotten episodes in the history of the seventeenth-century masque.<sup>9</sup>

The interpolated masques in Henry Purcell's 'dramatick operas' have, of course, been discussed in every book on Purcell's theatrical works, and many others besides.<sup>10</sup> Interpolated masques by other composers, however, have been less well served, and the



only comprehensive study of the Restoration interpolated masque is that included by Curtis Price in his book *Music in the Restoration Theatre* published in 1979.<sup>11</sup>

The main text covering the eighteenth-century masque is Roger Fiske's mammoth 1973 volume, *English Theatre Music in the Eighteenth Century*, published by the Oxford University Press.<sup>12</sup> The work is a comprehensive account of all aspects of the theatre as they relate to music during the relevant period. As a pioneering work, its breadth was invaluable; it was no longer pioneering in 1986, and it was less than helpful to find that, when the 'revised' edition was published, only a few textual alterations had been incorporated, there were some additional superficial footnotes, and the plates were regrouped in the centre of the book. One major drawback of the volume is its isolation from theatre history and the development of musical style. It also lacks a sense of an overall aesthetic, which may be the result of almost ignoring non-English works performed at the theatres during the relevant period. The problem is encapsulated in the author's first two sentences to the Preface:

This book is about London theatre music from the death of Purcell in 1695 to the death of Storace in 1796. By chance, this period roughly corresponds with the eighteenth century, and makes a satisfactory unit of history...<sup>13</sup>

While it is laudable to avoid labels such as the 'music of the eighteenth-century English theatre', Fiske also avoids many wider cultural issues. The view that

Anyone who wrote a comprehensive book about late eighteenth-century French opera would find himself

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describing quite as many rubbishy works as I have done, and the generalization would be almost *as true* if the subject were Italian opera. <sup>14</sup>

is rightly challenged by Winton Dean in his review of the first edition, who suggests that this is evading the issue of why so few good works were written in England:

France and Italy may have produced as many bad operas, but they produced far more good and presentable ones. No English contemporary ever approached the work of Paisiello, Cimarosa [etc]...there seems little here [late eighteenth-century England] worth reviving except as a curiosity or in excerpt. <sup>15</sup>

Dean suggests that the reason lay in the less than serious attitude of the public, the playhouse and the composers to these works.

Throughout this thesis, there are many statements and endnotes which correct Fiske's lists of sources, challenge his attributions and chronology, and show his ideas to be based on false premises. Yet without his work, we would have little inkling of the existence of many an obscure piece, of the whereabouts of their sources, of the contortions of their plots described in unforgettable phrases - 'The opera starts with Queen Arsinoe improbably asleep in a garden at night and being saved from an assassin by Ormondo, one of her generals. At the end of Act II, he saves her again in the same garden, this time from a dagger wielded by his ex-girl-friend, Dorisbe...Dorisbe stabs herself on a balcony, but the opera being Italianate, and this being the end of it, she remarks 'The Wound's not dangerous, I believe', and when forgiven by Arsinoe and Ormondo, she seems in excellent health' - and of interesting and scandalous biographical detail of those who worked in the theatre.

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It is, after all, easy to challenge statements which have been made nearly twenty years ago, and the fact that Fiske made them was an invaluable stimulus to reconsider the history of the masque.

So wide-ranging was Fiske's study, that for some time there has been little research carried out in the area of English theatre music, not to be confused with music in the English theatre, where Handel and the Italians continue to receive full treatment. Clive Chapman's study of pantomime was completed in 1981,<sup>16</sup> and Irena Cholić's work on music in eighteenth-century Shakespeare productions continues,<sup>17</sup> but there are no other genre studies currently being undertaken.

It can be no surprise that the single masque that has received the greatest attention is Handel's *Acis and Galatea*. The two largest studies are Winton Dean's study in *Handel's Dramatic Oratorios and Masques* of 1959,<sup>18</sup> and Brian Trowell's formidable 'Acis, Galatea and Polyphemus: a "serenata a tre voci"', published in 1987.<sup>19</sup> Dean's book provided the first detailed discussion of *Acis and Galatea* and its context. Nearly thirty years later Trowell's reconsideration of the sources supported Dean's contention that, in whatever version the masque was first performed, it was conceived by Handel as a three voiced serenata without action. Also on this subject, but also covering the masques of the seventeenth century, is the flawed *Handel and the Pastoral Tradition* by Ellen T. Harris.<sup>20</sup> There is little point in rehearsing her arguments here, or indeed, later; the review which gives the greatest insight into

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the content of this book is that by Winton Dean in *The Times Literary Supplement*, published on 21 November 1980.<sup>21</sup> However, both Dean and Harris place *Acis and Galatea* at the pinnacle of a tradition of masque writing; this thesis will show that, although this may be the case as far as the quality of the music is concerned, it was in fact an uninfluential work and the last gasp of a not particularly strong tradition.

*Acis and Galatea* is also included by D. F. Cook in his illuminating article 'Venus and Adonis: an English Masque "after the Italian Manner"' published in *The Musical Times* in 1980.<sup>22</sup> Between Dean and Trowell lay a host of lesser pieces which throw light on obscure aspects of the work; these include the letters and communications of Harry T. Dickinson,<sup>23</sup> Pat Rogers,<sup>24</sup> Terence Best,<sup>25</sup> and another article by Dean.<sup>26</sup>

*Acis and Galatea* is the only masque to have received such extensive individual treatment. Some works have been touched on in single composer studies. For example, D. F. Cook's dissertation on Pepusch, touched on the four Pepusch masques from 1715 and 1716,<sup>27</sup> Stoddard Lincoln's dissertation on John Eccles discussed *Europe's Revels on the Peace* and the *Judgment of Paris*,<sup>28</sup> and Robert McIntosh refers to Boyce's *Peleus and Thetis*, the masque in *The Tempest* and the *Secular Masque*.<sup>29</sup>

Two masques have been extensively considered by literary scholars. The first is Dryden's *Secular Masque*, which is discussed, although

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not very fruitfully, in most Dryden studies.<sup>30</sup> Here, the two most interesting pieces are the chapter in Steven Zwicker's book, *Politics and Language in Dryden's Poetry: The Arts of Disguise*, which considers the masque's political allegory,<sup>31</sup> and Bruce Dearing's article, 'Some views of a beast' which considers the metaphor used by Dryden in the final verse 'Thy chase had a beast in view', throws light on the allegory of this passage particularly, and the masque generally.<sup>32</sup> The allegory is considered in the third appendix to this thesis. The second masque is *Alfred*, whose political context has been discussed by those working on censorship and drama, and by those considering political allegory on the stage during this period. *Alfred* provides an illustration of the problems of an interdisciplinary study such as that of the masque. The problems of the text and context were considered by Alan Dugald McKillop, who solved many small problems and questions concerning the writing and subsequent revisions of the text.<sup>33</sup> His article in the *Philological Quarterly* in 1962 showed that the manuscript copy of 1741 post-dated the printed text of 1740, and was an expanded not a cut version of the work. His work has been totally ignored by musicologists; Alexander Scott was still able to declare in his article in *Music and Letters* in 1974, that the manuscript represented the first version of the piece.<sup>34</sup> Part of the problem here was Scott's new-style interpretation of the old-style date, 9 February 1740, a mistake made initially also by the present author.<sup>35</sup> Not to be outdone, literary scholars have followed suit - in 1987, the editor of the only modern edition of the masque, John C. Greene, wrote that the companion work at the

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Cliveden performance was Arne's *Judgment of Paris*,<sup>36</sup> a proposition which had been firmly disputed by Roger Fiske in 'A Cliveden Setting' in *Music and Letters* in 1966;<sup>37</sup> Alexander Scott cited Fiske in his *Musica Britannica* edition of the work in 1981.<sup>38</sup> Unfortunately, none of the studies above resulted in a more comprehensive consideration of the genre, with the result that wider trends have remained unidentified.

As far as the music of the masque during the period under discussion is concerned, the first important editions to appear were those works by Purcell which were included in the first collected edition of the composer's works begun by the Purcell Society in 1876.<sup>39</sup> The emphasis was, of course, on the music, and it is impossible in both the early and even in the later editions to see the music of the dramattick operas in context.

The establishment of *Musica Britannica* in 1951 gave this peculiarly English form a place in the publishing world which it would never have sustained in its own right. That the general editor of the time felt it was appropriate that the genre be represented from the first is indicated by the fact that of the first three volumes that appeared, two were devoted to post-Caroline masques. The first, *Cupid and Death* with music by Matthew Locke & Christopher Gibbons is a justly well-known work, and the number of performances given of it is increasing.<sup>40</sup> The second was Arne's setting of Dalton's revision of Milton's *Comus* of 1738.<sup>41</sup> The then general editor, Anthony Lewis, was an Arne enthusiast, and went on

to record the masque on the L'Oiseau Lyre label.<sup>42</sup> That this is still the only recording made of the work is surprising. *Musica Britannica* has continued publishing masques. In 1978, Ian Spink edited Arne's setting of the *Judgment of Paris*, reconstructing the missing choruses and recitatives,<sup>43</sup> and Arne's *Alfred* appeared in 1981, edited by Alexander Scott;<sup>44</sup> both editions have deficiencies (as does Dent's of *Cupid and Death*) and have to be used with great care. Because they are in a fragmentary state, both works are doubtful candidates for a national collection of music, and their inclusion has doubtless been at the expense of masques by other composers. For example, the 1701 settings of the *Judgment of Paris* have yet to be published in a modern edition, although the Weldon version may appear shortly; the inclusion of a Boyce or Pepusch masque might redress the balance. The only masque to appear in *Musica Britannica* in recent years has been *The Mask of Orpheus* in Michael Tilmouth's edition of Locke's dramatic music in 1986.<sup>45</sup>

Apart from these editions, a small number of facsimiles have been published. The masques in *The Island Princess*<sup>46</sup> and the John Eccles setting of the *Judgment of Paris*<sup>47</sup> have appeared in *Music for London Entertainment*; the Pepusch masques of *Venus and Adonis*, and *Apollo and Daphne*, the Daniel Purcell and Weldon settings of *Judgment of Paris*, Boyce's *Peleus and Thetis* and the *Secular Masque* and *Pan and Syrinx* by J. E. Galliard are among those works which are due to appear in this series. There are also facsimiles of later eighteenth-century piano reductions of Arne's *Alfred* and *Comus*.<sup>48</sup> There has been no attempt however, to make the music of

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these works comprehensively available. There have been over the years sporadic attempts to perform the repertoire. Apart from a number of obscure performances which are poorly documented - Arne's *Alfred* at Oban comes to mind - the most work has been done in this field by Opera Restor'd, the Consort of Musick and the Scottish Masking Company, and to a lesser extent, by Opera da Camera. Opera Restor'd's performances have included *The Death of Dido* and *Venus and Adonis* and have concentrated on an authentic style both in production and performance. The Scottish Masking Company's productions have been more pragmatic in style, preferring to re-interpret the work and the Company has no pretensions to an historical performance ideal. Their work has included the Vauxhall Gardens piece *The Masque at Cox's Museum* by John Hook, the *Judgment of Paris* in the Arne setting, Matthew Locke's *The Mask of Orpheus*, *The Four Seasons or Love in Every Age* by Jeremiah Clarke, and two productions of Boyce's *the Secular Masque*. The Consort of Musick has included in its general concert series semi-staged versions of John Blow's *Venus and Adonis* and *Cupid and Death*, both of which it has since recorded. Its director, Anthony Rooley, was also influential in its decision to include the performances of the three surviving original settings of the *Judgment of Paris* in the 1989 Proms Season at the Albert Hall. Whatever may be said against the inclusion of all three works in one evening, or about the performances themselves, it was an unparalleled opportunity to hear the masques together and to be able to consider (and confirm, at least as far as this author was concerned!) the results of the original competition. Finally, Musica da Camera's series of

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performances at St John's Smith Square did much to bring forward lesser known but worthy works of the eighteenth century including Maurice Greene's *Florimel* and Thomas Linley's *The Duenna*; included among these was Boyce's *Secular Masque* in a minimal but effective production.

With so many individual forays into the field - albethey forays which are often flawed through partiality - it seems an opportune time for a reassessment of the eighteenth-century masque. Hence the dissertation which follows. It falls into two volumes. The division of material between the volumes has been governed by division of text and apparatus. Volume One, therefore contains the discussion, whilst Volume Two consists of Endnotes, Tables, Illustrations, Musical Examples, Bibliography and Appendices.

The text is divided into three parts. The first part, 'Backgrounds', deals with the masque in the later seventeenth century and with the problems of terminology. The second part, entitled 'Directions', is itself subdivided into seven parts. The first is a brief introduction; thereafter, there are three main sections (ii, iv and vi), with two interludes (iii and v). Sections ii, iv and vi each take one of the quantitatively identified groups of masques (those of 1701, 1715-16 and 1733-4), and discusses their relation to the operatic and theatrical activity which was taking place at the time. Each of the interludes contains a short consideration of the genre which was an off-shoot of the masques previously discussed. Thus the masque burlesque follows the

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classical masque, and the pantomime masque follows the Italianate masque. The third and final part is a study of the masque of *Alfred*, of its dramatic, political and musical characteristics, of those who worked on it and those who watched it, of those who altered it and those who revived it.

There are four appendices - I; Textual alterations for *Alfred* in 1773, II; Transcription of production notes and stage directions for *Alfred* in 1773, III; Political allegory in the *Secular Masque*, and IV; Robert Adam, De Loutherbourg and the sets for *The Maid of the Oaks*. Lastly, there is an historical and bibliographical Catalogue of all masques written and performed between 1660 and 1800; it is arranged chronologically, and has its own introduction, critical apparatus, key and indices, and can be used as a discrete index.

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**Part I Backgrounds**

'This entertainment's parcel-gilt  
made up of various diversions'

William Davenant  
*The Rivals* 1668

**I i Towards the Definition of a Masque**

'Masque', like 'opera', is haunted by a definition from the great eighteenth-century lexicographer, Samuel Johnson, which today is interpreted as a scathing one:

A dramattick performance, written in a tragick style  
without attention to rules or probability.<sup>1</sup>

With opera, there was a body of opinion ranged against such attacks. Not so with the masque, for, as will become apparent during the course of the discussion contained in the following pages, the period after the Commonwealth is distinguished by an almost total lack of critical discourse on the masque form by literary theorists, authors and dramatic critics. In the case of the pastoral, for example, there were treatises on different types of writing representing the opposing schools of thought;<sup>2</sup> there was nothing comparable on masque writing. Some sketchy ideas of construction and style can be found in one or two masque prefaces, but these usually amount to no more than vague posturings on the part of their authors.<sup>3</sup> As we shall see, the three major attempts to establish an indigenous English operatic genre were directly responsible for sudden increases in the numbers of masques which were being written and performed, but these attempts did not result

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in a lasting popularity of the genre which might have stimulated the formulation of masquing theory.

It should be stated at the outset of this chapter that its basic presumption is that authors, composers, publishers and contemporary *commentators* using the term 'masque' did so with intention and must have been fully aware of what they were doing, of what they were trying to express, and of the dramatic possibilities they had their disposal to achieve these ends. If they did not, it is impossible to see how those who wrote masques were able to approach their task. 'Masque' will, therefore, refer only to those works which carry the word on their title pages, or to those pieces where contemporary references establish the authority of the term. When the expressions 'masque form' or 'masque writing' are used, they refer to techniques used in works in the above categories.

The application of the term 'masque' in this way is not only the basic presumption of this chapter; it is also the basic presumption of this thesis, for they both attempt to find a common thread and similar ideals in apparently diffuse works, rather than to establish a definition at the outset based on preconceived notions which exclude obvious works on one hand, while on the other, embrace other pieces which are doubtful contenders for inclusion at best, and which at worst are wholly irrelevant.

Further, in case the reader feels that a 'cat and mouse' game is being played with him, let me say now that the somewhat hackneyed

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formulation title of this chapter is deliberate. It will not present a narrow, watertight definition of 'masque', for the simple reason that the discussion will suggest that there is none. What it will do is to examine eighteenth-century considerations or mentions of the term, look at some twentieth-century definitions, and, finally, it will propose that several essential elements of the form offer some loose parameters within which to proceed with the discussion.

It has already been pointed out that there was no meaningful contemporary discussion of the masque, nor any formulation of masquing theory. It is therefore axiomatic that those definitions that can be found during the period in question are not *prescriptive*, but *descriptive*. Those in dictionaries, for example, seem to reflect the lexicographer's desire for completeness, rather than a particular knowledge of the subject. To return to Johnson, whose definition was quoted at the opening of this chapter, it seems possible that his ideas were drawn from Dryden's *Essay of Dramatick Poesie*:

For objects of incredibility, I could be satisfied from *Lisideius*, whether we have any so remov'd from all appearance of truth, as are those of *Corneilles Andromède*. A Play which has been frequented the most of any he has writ? If the *Perseus*, or the Son of an Heathen God, the *Pegasus* and the Monster were not capable to choak a strong belief, let him blame any representation of ours hereafter. Those indeed were objects of delight; yet the reason is the same as to the probability; for he makes it not a Ballet or Masque, but a Play, which is to resemble truth.<sup>4</sup>

Here a play represents truth, while the ballet and the masque are forms which can be used as vehicles for 'improbable' situations.

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Johnson supports this with an (unassigned) quotation from the author and pamphleteer Henry Peacham, who commented:

Thus I have broken the ice to invention, for the lively representation of floods and rivers necessary for our painters and poets in their pictures. poems. comedies and masques.<sup>5</sup>

Allegorical figures were clearly part of Peacham's conception of a masque. Turning to Johnson's definition of opera, which he appears to have taken from Dryden's introduction to *Albion and Albanus*, we find that it differs little from the reality of many masques:

An *opera* is a poetical tale or fiction, represented by vocal and instrumental musick, adorned with scenes, machines, and dancing.<sup>6</sup>

The difference between the two genres lies in the expression 'poetical tale or fiction'. Whereas his emphasis here is on narrative, the masque was a presentation, and had to be told in a 'tragick style'.

Johnson's definitions appear to have been misused as much then as now, for some later authors manipulated that of the masque to defend themselves against charges of dramatic incompetence. Edward Thompson, for example, quotes it to this end in the introduction to *The Syrens*, in an attempt to escape censure over the lack of 'probability'.<sup>7</sup>

More general is the definition offered by Thomas Busby in his *Complete Dictionary of Music*:

MASQUE. A musical drama chiefly consisting of singing, machinery, and dancing. *Masques*, which preceded the regular, or legitimate drama, required such splendid and expressive decorations, that they were necessarily at first confined to the palaces of princes, and the

mansions of the nobility. Those of Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, Sir William Davenant, Milton, and others, originally appeared in that manner, and seem, indeed, to have been written for particular occasions.<sup>13</sup>

Busby is the first to suggest that the masque is primarily an 'occasional' form (that is 'tailor-made' by the author to reflect the event, not simply 'ordered' by the patron) written to order for a particular event. Some lexicons simply omit a definition of a masque altogether. Nathan Bailey, for example, in his *An Universal Etymological English Dictionary* of 1721, gives a definition of the Mask - 'a Covering for the Face, a Vizard' - and the masquerade - 'a Company of Persons having Masks and Vizards on, and dancing or discoursing together' - but offers no details of the dramatic form.<sup>14</sup> In the 1736 edition, which claims to be 'a more Compleat Universal' dictionary, it has been expanded to include a discussion of gargoyles as masks, but still makes no mention of the stage.<sup>15</sup>

The confusion of masque with opera is successfully avoided by Johnson and Busby; it seems to have been an error first made by Charles Burney in pursuit of English operatic history, and then perpetuated throughout musical historiography:

But to return to MASQUES, which were certainly the precursors of *operas* in England, and belong to the chain of dramas which completed the *union of Poetry and Music* on our stage... *Masques* in England certainly bear some resemblance to *operas*: as they are in dialogue; performed on a stage; ornamented with machinery, dances and decorations; and have always Music, vocal and instrumental. But then the essential and characteristic criterion, *recitative*, is wanting, without which the resemblance is imperfect. Our musical pieces, which are sometimes honoured with the name of opera, differ in this particular so much, that they more resemble masques than the dramas which are entitled to that appellation; for, in English musical dramas, the dialogue is all declaimed or spoken in the same manner as in our old masques; and

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in Italy, whence we have both name and thing, an opera consists of both recitatives and airs, and is sung from beginning to the end.<sup>11</sup>

The 'essential characteristic criterion, *recitative*' is not wanting, as *Venus and Adonis*, the several settings of *The Judgment of Paris* and *Acis and Galatea* demonstrate. Burney confuses dramattick opera or semi-opera with masques when he declares that 'musical pieces which are sometimes honoured with the name opera' resemble masques because they happen to have spoken dialogue. A masque can, of course, be part of a dramattick opera, as in Purcell's *The History of Dioclesian*, but not only does the whole not resemble one, but the masque episodes were sung throughout. Burney's use of the phrase 'old masques' suggests that he was, at the begining at least, referring to the Jonsonian type; this being the case, there are even fewer similarities between this and his later references to English musical dramas.

However, at the same time, Burney does make the following comment:

They are in dialogue; performed on a stage; ornamented with machinery, dances and decorations; and have always Music, vocal and instrumental.<sup>12</sup>

When this is combined with Busby's opening sentence - 'A Musical Drama chiefly consisting of singing, machinery, and dancing' - the possibility starts to emerge that the masque can perhaps be seen not as a particular *form*, but as a loose and variable collection of certain elements manipulated to fulfil a particular aesthetic ideal.

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These eighteenth-century definitions are, on the whole, either taciturn or unilluminating, so perhaps some twentieth-century ones should be examined. The most general ones tend to describe the Stuart Court masque and ignore any works after the Restoration. Authors also emphasise one particular period over another, with the result that a definition valid in 1650 will seem awkward and, if not irrelevant, at least partially inapplicable to those works called masques in 1705. The *Oxford English Dictionary*, for example, assumes that the masque ceased to exist in 1642, with the start of the Civil War.<sup>13</sup> This is the view also contained in the *Oxford Companion to the Theatre*:

The Civil War put an end to the masque, which was never revived, but it had provided the means of introducing into England the new Italian Scenery.<sup>14</sup>

The author concludes with the surprising statement that:

Milton's *Comus* (1634) though entitled 'a masque' is in reality a PASTORAL, and was probably called a masque to distinguish it from the plays given in the public theatre.<sup>15</sup>

The masque was only given the title *Comus* in the eighteenth century, the original version being called *A maske presented at Ludlow Castle*, and it is impossible that Milton, Lawes and the Bridgewater family were unaware of the implications of giving it the title 'masque'.<sup>16</sup> There is also no question of *distinguishing* it from plays given at the public theatre since the work was only intended for the single private performance in 1634.

*The Oxford Dictionary of Music* fails to mention the independent masque of the Restoration.<sup>17</sup> It also implies that those

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interpolated in spoken drama were not popular before the Commonwealth and that *Alfred* is a late example of an interpolated masque. It does, however, allow that the masque still existed during the Commonwealth, and mentions the masques of the twentieth century. Peter Holman's definition in *The Oxford Companion to Music* is even more restricted, in that it concentrates almost solely on the Caroline and Stuart Court masques.<sup>18</sup> Despite this, it omits discussion of the masques interpolated in spoken plays, either before or after the Commonwealth, and says nothing of the masque after 1689. It also implies that the works after this time were all-sung, and states that '*Cupid and Death* is the only masque for which the music survives more or less complete', which ignores Lawes's music for *Comus*. Lefkowitz, the author of the article on masque in *Grove VI*, suggests some very general attributes - allegorical or mythological themes, the use of music, poetry and dancing, elaborate sets and so on - but makes no secret of the fact that the Jones/Jonson works are the only pieces which concern him. Indeed, his discussion of the form after 1660 tails away into an untidy potted history of the masque up to the present day.<sup>19</sup>

Another problem in achieving clarity in discussions of the masque, is the attempt to limit the form by the use of an inaccurate or a non-existent chronology. This is frequently brought erroneously to bear on the development or shaping of the form itself. Winton Dean, for example, suggests that

After Purcell's death the masque, hitherto a diversion inserted in a drama with which it had no necessary connection, had become detached and developed into an entertainment on its own, generally played as an

afterpiece.<sup>20</sup>

The masque before Purcell's death was clearly not solely 'a diversion in a drama', as instanced by *Venus and Adonis*, *Calisto*, and *Beauties Triumph*, and the implication that the masque then ceased to be inserted into dramattick opera and spoken drama is misleading. Another example of chronological confusion can be found in Willi Apel's entry in the *Harvard Dictionary of Music*:

After the Civil War (c1660) opera gradually superseded the masques, which deteriorated into fancy dress balls.<sup>21</sup>

while Roger North so far forgets himself as to convey the impression that no masques were produced after the Restoration, and confusingly writes:

In the reign of King James I musick had the greater encouragement, for the Masques, which were a sort of balles or operas found imployment [sic] for very many of them; [musicians].<sup>22</sup>

It is difficult to understand how the masquerade, ball and ballet ever became confused, as their traditions are each quite distinct from the masque, and, although obviously variable and diverse entertainments, there seems to have been little or no doubt what actually occurred when the participants attended them. For example, a London newspaper for 15 February 1718 gives the following account of the ball arranged at the theatre in the Haymarket:

The Room is exceedingly large, beautifully adorned, and illuminated with five hundred Wax Lights; on the Sides are divers Beaufets, over which is written the several Wines therein contained, as Canary, Burgundy, Champagne, Rhenish, &c. each most excellent in its Kind; of which all are at Liberty to drink what they please; with large Services of all Sorts of Sweetmeats. There are also two Sets of Music, at due Distance from each other, performed by very good Hands. By the vast Variety of Dresses (many of them very rich) you would fancy it a Congress of the principal Persons of all Nations in the World, as Turks,

Italians, Indian Polanders, Spainards, Venetians, &c.  
There is an absolute Freedom of Speech, without the least  
Offence given thereby; while all appear better bred than  
to offer to any Thing profane, rude, or  
immodest...<sup>23</sup>

There was gambling, masquerading, and supper, and throughout the piece, the author refers to similar entertainments in other countries. Robert Etheridge Moore goes further and, ignoring available evidence, suggests that the terms 'masque', 'masquerade' and 'ballet' were simply interchangeable.<sup>24</sup> This brings us to the much broader issue of the apparent interchangeability of terms and the confusion reigning in commentaries on the eighteenth century; this will be considered in detail in the following chapter, focusing on Handel's *Acis and Galatea*.

Percy M. Young's circumspect definition found in *Grove V* is, perhaps, the best expression of the chronological relationship between masque and other genres:

Although the later story of the masque is essentially that of opera, it may be stated that many of Purcell's & some of Handel's finest scenes would not have been created but for the pioneer work of the Jacobean and Caroline poets, painters and musicians. Purcell's *The Fairy Queen*, for instance, is in form much more a sequence of masques and antimasques than an opera. Most of *King Arthur* and the witches' and sailors' music of *Dido and Aeneas* also maintain the same tradition.<sup>25</sup>

However, the statement that 'the later story of masque is essentially that of opera' is misleading. Although the history of the masque and opera overlap at various points throughout the century, it has, for example, no generic relationship to all-sung Italian opera introduced onto the London stage in 1705. After 1720, the masque became almost entirely linked to an event whether Royal,

or private and, in many cases, was some sort of representation of that occasion; this did not apply to opera during the same period.

The discussion here has shown that it is possible to approach the masque from several different directions - theatrical and musical history, literary criticism, or developments in choreography - but to emphasise any one of these unduly immediately invalidates the discussion. Winton Dean and Allardyce Nicoll offer useful interconnected examples here. In *A History of English Drama*, Nicoll, while not attempting to define the masque in the eighteenth century, presents a short overview of the form. In judging the literary merits of the texts, he claims that

The hey-day of the masque is to be found...rather in the years after 1730, than in the those before.<sup>26</sup>

This is almost impossible to support not only from the evidence he offers, but from that discovered since. His discussion makes it clear that the quality of the text of Dalton's 1738 version of Milton's *Comus* is his prime criterion. Yet this was not a new text, but was an old work, as are many of the masque settings from around this period - *The Secular Masque*, *The Judgment of Paris*, *Peleus and Thetis* and so on. Further, many of those works presented after 1730 are part of the literary and musical dross of the eighteenth century. Even if Nicoll's claim is considered simply in terms of the number of masques written, the greater proportion of masques date from before 1730; this holds true even if the group of wedding masques omitted by Nicoll is included.<sup>27</sup>

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Dean attacks Nicoll claiming that his

treatment of this question is vitiated by his total neglect of the music. The masque cannot be discussed as a purely literary form.<sup>28</sup>

Dean is correct to draw attention to the importance of the music in the history of the genre - indeed, this thesis will show that it contains part of the key to its erratic development - but his own discussion is based on a mistaken premise. He considers the masque as a musical genre only and, while touching on the literary and dramatic aspects of the libretto, does not relate them to the century as a whole. Dean fails to recognise that the masque was a form on which musical experiments unrelated to it were conducted, and that to consider the musical aspects alone is unhelpful in trying to chart any course of development. The point is illustrated by his positioning of Handel's *Acis and Galatea* as the highpoint of masque writing in the eighteenth century solely on account of his belief in the excellence of Handel's score;<sup>29</sup> this is despite the fact that the work was only performed once privately in 1718, did not reach the stage until 1731, and had no discernible influence on the genre. Further, the plot is indicative only of the short-lived pastoral-like Italianate masques of the first two decades of the century. Ellen Harris makes precisely the same error when she talks of Handel 'furthering' masque writing, a claim that is impossible to sustain when *Acis and Galatea* is essentially the last work of what had been a fairly strong tradition.<sup>30</sup>

So far, it can be seen that the definitions and discussions that have been formulated are contradicted, either wholly or in part, by

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the available evidence of the works called masques at the time, and that the genre has been ill-served by prejudiced accounts of its form and history. I mentioned above that Busby's and Burney's definitions suggest that the masque can be considered as a collection of elements manipulated to fulfil a particular aesthetic ideal. These particular elements consist of all aspects of the theatre - dancing, singing, mime, elaborate sets, music, pageantry, poetry and so on - but whether they are all present or only some of them are used, whether the result is all-sung or has spoken dialogue, is irrelevant.

What then, are the characteristics of this 'aesthetic ideal'? Firstly, the piece must be allegorical. Whether the allegory can be applied to a particular event - the signing of a peace treaty as in *The Triumph of Peace*, or a royal wedding as in *Coelina* - or whether it is a patriotic outburst - such as *The Choice of Apollo* - the allegorical relationships must be present. In masques in plays and dramattick operas, the very loose allegorical relationships to the main drama fulfill this condition. Secondly, the masque must always be a presentation. That a masque was 'presented' and not 'performed' is well documented: 'Christmas, his masque; as it was presented at Court. 1616', 'Alfred: a masque. Represented before before their Royal Highnesses...On the first of August, 1740' and, from a masque of a different kind, 'A Mask presented at Ludlow Castle on Michaelmas Day 1634'. A masque was presented to the court, to the monarch and, in the eighteenth century, to the audience. While the theatre masque remained interpolated in a

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larger play such as the *The Mask of Hymen* or *The Four Seasons*, the characters in the main drama were often the recipients of the masque's sentiments, and provided a captive on-stage audience. Thirdly, a masque must be a celebration. It remains a mystery why this particular aspect has not been given greater prominence in previous definitions. The masque can be a celebration of virtue as in *Comus*, or of kingship as in *Alfred*; it can celebrate the accession to the throne of a king as in *The Tears and Triumphs of Parnassus* or a royal wedding as in *The Festival; or the Impromptu Revels Masque*. In *The Four Seasons* it is love represented by the four ages of life correlating with each season of the year. Dryden's *Secular Masque* is a celebration of the ability of the human race to hope and to look forward to the future, despite the problems which are continually created by politicians. The celebration is frequently accomplished by a final transformation; the triumph of Daphne's virtue by her transformation into a laurel tree, Calisto's similar transformation into a constellation, or Galatea's celebration of Acis's life and memory by her transformation of the boulder which crushed him into a fountain.

Lastly, one ever-present condition: that the work is always written in English. Whatever parallels with similar forms can be found in other countries - and there are many - and no matter how often it adopted or absorbed continental ideas, the masque remained a peculiarly British form.

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### I ii Conflicting Descriptive Titles: A Problem of Eighteenth-Century Terminology

The previous discussion has intentionally excluded the issue of the descriptive titles applied to the works by authors, publishers, advertisers and diarists. These have played a decisive role in the formation of many masque definitions after 1700 because the same work may be described in many different and apparently contradictory ways, calling its status into question.

One of the best examples of apparent terminological confusion caused by this practice is provided by Handel's *Acis and Galatea*. Written as a private entertainment for the Duke of Chandos while Handel was acting as his domestic composer, the first performance took place at the Duke's seat at Cannons Park during the summer of 1718. At least nine different titles or combinations of titles were applied to it during the eighteenth century including 'opera', 'English opera' and 'Pastoral Interlude', as well as 'masque'.

The text was by Pope and Gay, with contributions from Arbuthnot and possibly others, and draws heavily on Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.<sup>1</sup> The events of the work (one would hesitate to call them all 'action') are quickly told. Acis and Galatea search for each other in a sylvan landscape; Polyphemus, a Cyclops, loves Galatea and, when rejected by her in favour of Acis, throws a boulder which crushes Acis. Galatea, on the advice of the chorus who encourage her to be

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positive about things, turns *Acis* into a fountain stream to assuage her grief.

A major factor in the seemingly contradictory state of affairs over titles was the work's sustained popularity throughout the eighteenth century. As shown in Table I ii 1, the masque (as we shall call it) is absent from only twenty of a possible sixty-nine theatrical seasons, although many of these saw only one performance of the masque (and that a Royal Command), and there were never more than eleven presentations in any one season. Its performances spanned many changes of fashion in theatrical production. It was also presented at nearly every possible theatrical venue available in London, and there were probably performances at the various pleasure gardens which have not been recorded. Libretti survive for performances all over Great Britain including ones at Oxford, Bath, Newcastle and Edinburgh.

Of course, one of the reasons for the continuing terminological confusion over this in the twentieth century is that no libretto or conducting score survives from the Cannons performance.<sup>2</sup> No details are known of the staging of the event nor how the work was presented - although the presence of Mr. Desaguliers noted by Henry Brydges, suggests that fireworks were possibly part of the entertainment<sup>3</sup> - and it is therefore impossible to be certain of Handel's intentions. The first surviving use of the term 'masque' in connection with *Acis and Galatea* was in 1720. This was by Noland in a catalogue of the music in the possession of the Duke of

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Chandos, where it appears as '"O the pleasure of the plain", a masque for five voices and instruments, in score'.<sup>4</sup> The inventory was signed by Johann Pepusch, by then Chandos's household musician. This score is now lost and the term 'masque' does not appear on any of the surviving manuscript scores. Conversely, those scores that do survive have either no title at all, or, as will be discussed later in this chapter, use the word 'opera'.

Still, 'masque' was also the term associated with the published editions from the outset. The advertisement in *The Post Boy* for 28 February 1723, which referred to the edition which appeared in 1724,<sup>5</sup> described the work as the 'Masque of Acis and Galatea', as did the 1725 edition published by John Walsh:<sup>6</sup>

The/SONGS/and Symphony's/in the Masque of/ACIS and  
GALATEA/made and perform'd for his/Grace/the Duke of  
Chandos/...<sup>7</sup>

It also appears on the editions of 1732, c1732, 1743, 1769, 1784, 1785, c1785, c1799, on the title pages of a range of libretti dating from around 1736 to 1792, and in related documents such as the publisher Walsh's catalogues.<sup>8</sup>

The long and early association of the term 'masque' with *Acis and Galatea* suggests that its use would have implied something specific in the eighteenth century. Brian Trowell's suggestion that Walsh may have looked at the score and wondered 'what title would most readily be understood by its prospective purchasers' is improbable, in the light of the lack of other masques being written about his time.<sup>9</sup> As Rosamond McGuinness has shown, Walsh was astute

to the point of being cunning, and the genre was not fashionable enough at any point in the century for a publisher to apply the term in the hope of increasing the sales of his publications.<sup>10</sup>

If Pope, Gay and Handel thought the subject of *Acis and Galatea* suitable for a masque, they were not the first to do so. The legend had already been the subject of one successful masque earlier in the century. Peter Anthony Motteux's interlude-masque was written for performance with Ravenscroft's *The Mad Lover* in 1701:

The MASQUE/OF/Acis and Galatea, /with the rest of  
the/MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENTS, /In a New OPERA/CALL'D/The Mad  
Lover...<sup>11</sup>

Although based on the same fable it differs markedly from Ovid, for Motteux has altered the 'catastrophe' and makes Acis and Galatea 'happy at last by marriage'; he has also introduced the unwelcome subplot of the loves of Roger and Joan 'to make the piece more dramatical'.<sup>12</sup> This last is perhaps a survival of the earlier anti-masque tradition.

However, not long before the first performance of Handel's setting, another title was introduced. The first extant description of Handel's *Acis and Galatea* is that given by Sir David Dalrymple, first Baronet of Hailes, to Hugh Campbell, third Earl of Loudoun. After a visit to Cannons in late May of 1718 he wrote;

Since my Last I have been at Cannons with E. of Carnarvan who lives *en Prince* & to boot is a worthy beneficent man, I heard sermon at his parish church which for painting and ornament exceeds every thing in this Country he has a Chorus of his own, the Musick is made for himself and sung by his own servants, besides which there is a little opera now a making for his own diversion whereof the Musick will not be made publick. The words

are to be furnished by Mr<sup>rs</sup> Pope & Gay, the musick to be composed by Hendell, It is as good as finished, and I am promised some of the Songs by Dr. Arbuthnot who is one of the club of composers which your Ld shall have as soon as I get it.<sup>13</sup>

Dalrymple was writing in advance of the performance, but his use of the term 'opera' suggests that the final intention was for a staged version with action, although Trowell argues convincingly that Handel's conception of the work must have been one for three voices only, and that the resulting dramatic anomalies would have precluded the possibility of a staged performance.<sup>14</sup>

A further modification to Dalrymple's title can be found in the manuscript of *Acis* in the Earl of Malmesbury's private collection. Here it is called an 'English Opera'.<sup>15</sup> This score is dated 1718, and is the earliest surviving manuscript source for the piece.<sup>16</sup> The score is in the hand of Johann Pepusch, and belonged to Elizabeth Legh of Adlington. The term 'English Opera' was at this point represented by dramattick opera and masques, apart from one English opera 'after the Italian Manner'.

Around the same time, another adjective was attached to 'opera'. Another score, this time in the Henry Watson Music Library, which dates from before 1730, and which at one time belonged to Charles Jennens, has the title 'The Pastorall Opera call'd *Acis* and *Galatea*'.<sup>17</sup> This anticipates the later brief fashion for referring to *Acis* as a 'pastoral'. Generally, the word pastoral was used to describe works consisting of rural characters and scenes from country life. The only contemporary discussion which suggests some

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criteria with which to distinguish the masque from the pastoral is that by the literateur Thomas Cooke in his preface to the masque *Albion: or the Court of Neptune*, published in 1724. Cooke's preface shows that he believed himself to be a link in a natural progression from earlier masque styles:

If we were to make strict Inquiry into the Original, of this Way of Writing, I believe we should find it [the masque] (tho' not call'd by the same Name as it now is) almost, if not quite, as old as the Pastoral; and it is not unlikely that Thespis was the Inventor of both; for it is very natural to suppose, that at the birth of Dramatic Poetry, Bacchus and Silenus, who were always favourite Gods, were personated by some of the Actors, with their Faces besmeared with Berries, or the Lees of Wine. Altho' the Scene for [a] Pastoral is fix'd in the Country, the persons represented are sometimes Gods; and tho' every Masque may not be a Pastoral, (the Scenary [sic] thereof not being confined to the Country only) some Pastorals may very justly be called by both Names. The Silenus of Virgil, with a little Alteration, would make a Dramatick Performance, and be made to answer the true Design of a Masque: In the Character of that God, Virgil makes a fine compliment to his Friend and Patron, Quintilius Varus.<sup>10</sup>

Cooke bases his distinction on two characteristics: the scene in which the work is set, and the *dramatis personae*.

The choice of characters in the pastoral had been an issue for some time, but by the period in which Cooke was writing, shepherds and shepherdesses were paramount, although other types of country occupations could be used as well:

Poetry in all its Parts is an Imitation, and Pastoral Poetry is an Imitation of the Lives and Conversations of Shepherds, or rather of rural Actions. And for this Reason there ought to be an Air of Piety maintained through the whole, the Persons introduc'd being uncorrupted, innocent and simple, such as Shepherds, Goatherds, Cowherds, Pruners and the like. We shou'd therefore always find represented in these characters that ancient Innocence, and unpractis'd, and undesigning Plainness, which is suppos'd by a sort of general consent

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to have been then in the world.<sup>19</sup>

Although characters had to be 'uncorrupted, innocent and simple', there was a great deal of debate as to exactly what this entailed. The essence of the problem was to reconcile the 'rudeness' and lack of cultivation with the high minded thoughts that they needed to express. Writers must present the characters' simplicity

but they were not obliged to represent them as dull and stupid, and can invest them with good sense and even wit *providing* their manner of thinking be not too gallant or refined.<sup>20</sup>

In contrast, the characters in masques were, as Cooke states, the gods and goddesses of the classical pantheon and they could not be considered 'innocent' in any sense of the word. Nor do the classical tales which were presented as masques allow their presentation as anything but sophisticated, if not degenerate, heathens.

The general structure of pastoral plots had to mirror the simplicity of the characters:

Every *Pastoral Poem* must have a little *Plot* or visible *Design* or *Fable*, to which we may justly give the Name of a *Pastoral Scene*. But this *Plot*, *Fable* or *Design* must be simple, and one not compounded of two or more, as the Moderns have introduc'd into the *Drama*, ... Though this *Plot* must be simple, and one, yet this Simplicity and Unity does by no means exclude *Digressions*, if they are short.<sup>21</sup>

In *Theories of Pastoral Poetry in England 1684-1798*, J. E.

Congleton suggests 1688 as the beginning of the preoccupation with the setting of the pastoral, a preoccupation which grew as the genre lost its allegorical contents. Originally allegory was one of its central concerns:

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Nearly all other Renaissance critics, however, follow Petrarch and Boccaccio and insist that the primary purpose of pastoral poetry is to deal allegorically with religious and political ideas and issues.<sup>22</sup>

This is also supported by the writings of Barely, Drayton, and others. However, by the eighteenth century, Gildon was able to write:

The Poet does not lie under any necessity of making his plot *Allegorical*, that is, to have some real Persons meant by those fictitious Names of the Shepherd's introduc'd.<sup>23</sup>

It is possible that, if it was no longer suitable for allegory to be found in the pastoral, authors using such material who wished to construct an allegory may have tended to call their works 'masques' because they no longer fitted the current expectations of the pastoral.

A unique opportunity to compare the masque and the pastoral is given by Motteux in his entertainment called *The Novelty* of 1697. According to Giles Jacob in *The Poetical Register* of 1719, it was modelled on Davenant's bouquet of short plays in various genres from 1663, *A Playhouse to be Let*.<sup>24</sup> The pastoral was contributed to the entertainment by John Oldmixon, was said to be 'an English example at this time of a form which had developed largely through the classical and French', but was presented 'without plot and little inspiration'.<sup>25</sup>

*Thyrsis*, a pastoral conforms to the pattern described by Harris. Thyrsis, believing that Dorinda is dead, has apparently offered his hand to Dorinda's sister, Cleomira. Meanwhile, Dorinda, who has not



in fact perished, returns in disguise to discover the truth. Montano, who is her protectress, assures Dorinda that Thyrsis has only done this because he sees in Cleomira, a likeness to herself. Thyrsis is saved from an attack from satyrs by Montano, he recognises Dorinda, and there is general rejoicing as they sing and leave the stage accompanied by music. The moral of the tale is contained in a scene between Thyrsis, Cleomira and her lover Damon. Thyrsis offers her riches which she scorns, while Damon offers her love and constancy which she accepts.

*Hercules, a masque*, involves gods and goddesses, rather than shepherds and shepherdesses and is essentially the classical tale of Hercules' death. Hercules has completed his tasks, but has fallen in love with Omphale. She does not trust his declaration and tests him by suggesting that he learn to spin. Two of Omphale's women enter, followed by the two men carrying spinning wheels. They dance during which 'they turn the wheels with diverse Postures and Motions'. Omphale declares that he must dress for softer arts than war and Omphale's attendants strip him of his war gear and replace it with a white hood, a nightshirt and a white bib-apron; 'then they cap his Club with Flax, and set a Spinning-Wheel before him'. Hercules's wife Dejanira and her children appear to take their faithless husband and father home. She gives him a shirt and vest which he puts on. Dejanira and the children leave, and the shirt begins to burn into him. He calls on Jove to 'Collect the Clouds, and squeeze 'em into Show'rs', but to no avail. He envisages a 'Trembling Heav'n' in which to cool himself and 'A Poetical Heaven

appears, in Perspective, and a Fire under it', into which he flings himself. The attendants return and rejoice that Alcides lives on high, for 'He lives who does not fear to die'.

Cooke's arguments, when applied to *Thyrsis*, *Hercules*, and the two previously mentioned versions of *Acis and Galatea*, suggest some possible criteria for distinguishing the masque from the pastoral. The tale of *Hercules* and the characters it contains belong to the classical pantheon, whilst those of *Thyrsis* belong to pastoral mythology. The characters of *Acis and Galatea* are classical in origin - Acis for instance is the son of Faunus and a nymph, while Galatea is the daughter of Nereus, the son of Oceanus and Tethys: even Polyphemus is one of the many sons of Neptune. However, 'the persons represented [in the pastoral] are sometimes Gods' so *Acis and Galatea* can still be justified as a pastoral. An essential requirement of the pastoral is an uninterrupted arcadian setting which is 'wholly fix'd in the country', a criterion met by both versions of the tale, by *Thyrsis*, but not by *Hercules*. *Acis and Galatea*, therefore, can be described as a masque by virtue of its tale and its classical characters, and a pastoral because of its setting.

The term pastoral was only briefly associated with Handel's *Acis and Galatea*. In 1731, the performance at the theatre in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, it was advertised as a 'pastoral interlude',<sup>26</sup> and the published libretto for the 1732 performance calls it AN ENGLISH/PASTORAL OPERA',<sup>27</sup> while the score which Trowell and Smith

have connected with the 1731 performance reads 'The Whole Score of Mr Handel's pastorall...'.<sup>28</sup> However, after this date, there are only a few references using pastoral in any combination of titles. It was the titles 'masque', 'serenata' and 'oratorio' which were to dominate the advertisements for performances and the title-pages of the published music and libretti for the next sixty years.

While Cooke's discussion suggests the possibilities of interchangeability discussed above, it cannot be assumed that the terms 'serenata' and 'oratorio' can be treated in the same way. Neither can have come within Cooke's terms of reference, for the serenata form was not widely known in England at this time and the English oratorio did not yet exist. However, taking Cooke's line of approach as a starting point, it can be conjectured that both titles are justifiable in their respective contexts.

The term 'serenata' is first used in the advertisement of 5 June 1732, for Handel's production at the King's Theatre in the Haymarket and is echoed by the title page of the libretto:

ACIS/AND/GALATEA,/A/SERENATA./As it is performed at  
the/KING'S THEATRE/IN THE/HAY-MARKET./ (r)/Formerly  
composed by Mr HANDEL, and/nor revised by him, with  
several ADDITIONS./...and are to/be sold at the King's  
Theatre in the Hay-Market.<sup>29</sup>

Significantly, 'serenata' is not used in any of the surviving manuscript copies.<sup>30</sup> Brian Trowell, however, suggests persuasively that the masque fits the necessary criteria. To summarise his arguments briefly, serenatas were 'cantatas of considerable length' for 'several singers'; there were at least two characters who could

be Gods, mythological heroes, allegorical figures, Arcadians or personifications of rivers, places or natural objects; were longer than solo cantatas and shorter than operas; the recitatives tended to be shorter than those in operas, while the serenata had more *da capo* arias proportionally; they were occasional pieces and were normally given in the evening, sometimes in the open air; they were 'performed like oratorios without a change of scene or action' in the sense of stage movement; and only the grandest had a chorus.<sup>31</sup>

One of the most popular serenatas of the eighteenth century was William Boyce's *Solomon*.<sup>32</sup> *Solomon* is divided into three substantial acts and its *dramatis personae* consist of a female and a male character and an SATB chorus, and has the sizeable instrumental forces of two oboes, two trumpets, two violins, viola and a continuo of bassoon, 'cello and cembalo.<sup>33</sup> The female and male characters are unspecified pastoral Arcadians - she addresses him as 'lovely shepherd' and 'gentle shepherd', whilst he refers to her as 'Fairest of the Virgin Throng' - and it is certainly larger than a solo cantata having 12 recitatives, 9 airs, 2 duets, 5 choruses, an overture and sinfonia.

There can be no doubt that *Acis and Galatea* 'passes muster' as a serenata, although whether or not the work was occasional is open to question.<sup>34</sup> It is unlikely that there was any allegorical significance in the work relevant to the Duke of Chandos or to the Royal family, who commanded no less than 21 performances of it between 1763 and 1785. Neither of the title roles have any

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outstanding aspects to their characters, except their deep love for one another. Indeed, Galatea's greatest virtue, her constancy to Acis, has somewhat negative results, since Acis is crushed to death by Polyphemus's boulder, though of course she has supernatural recourse.

The criteria cited by Trowell, however, also describe a masque with equal accuracy, with the exception of the manner of staging, for the masque was acted, while the serenata was not. When *Acis and Galatea* was performed on Saturday 10 June 1732, the work was advertised in the following manner:

There will be no Action on the Stage, but the Scene will represent in a Picturesque Manner, a Rural Prospect, with Rocks, Groves, Fountains and Grottos amongst which will be disposed a Chorus of Nymphs and Shepherds, the Habits and every other Decoration suited to the Subject.<sup>25</sup>

The review of the performances in Table I ii 2, suggests that this was the first time this style of performance had been attempted. Clearly, the intrinsic nature of *Acis and Galatea* means that it would lend itself to a performance without action and it seems most likely that this new difference in the manner of performance was the motivation behind the alteration of the descriptive title from pastoral interlude, opera, and masque to serenata. If a serenata-style performance had been the original, it is difficult to believe that the advertising possibilities of performing the work 'as first presented with great applause before the Duke of Chandos' would not have been exploited.

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Towards the last quarter of the eighteenth century, *Acis and Galatea* again changes its main descriptive title, this time to 'oratorio'. The almost accidental creation in 1732 of English Oratorio, summed up by Dean as being 'casual and unpremeditated' with 'its parentage discreetly veiled, and its legitimacy not above suspicion', is of interest in this context, as the work in question was a revision of the earlier masque *Haman and Mordecai*.<sup>36</sup>

*Haman and Mordecai* was also written for the Duke of Chandos, and seems to date from the latter half of 1720. The basis for the use of the title 'masque' is the autograph, which bears the title *Haman and Mordecai. A Masque*; there are no other sources related to this work which use the title 'masque'.<sup>37</sup> As Winton Dean points out, the work's antecedents lie in French classical drama, not, as in the case of *Acis and Galatea*, in the English pastoral masque.<sup>38</sup>

As Table I ii 3 shows, *Esther*, the revised version of *Haman and Mordecai*, did not reach the London theatres until 1732, where it was initially in a staged version. Even here it was referred to by at least one diarist as an 'oratorio or religious opera'.<sup>39</sup> The next few performances were also staged versions. The change in the style of performance for 2 May was announced in the *Daily Journal* on 19 April, in a manner not dissimilar to the 1732 serenata performance of *Acis and Galatea*:

N.B. There will be no Action on the Stage, but the House will be fitted up in a decent Manner, for the Audience. The Musick to be disposed after the Manner of the Coronation Service.<sup>40</sup>

That the Bishop of London, Edmund Gibson, played a crucial role in the development of oratorio by forcing Handel to perform *Esther* on stage without action cannot be disputed, for it was he who refused permission for the work to be 'represented on that stage, even with books in the children's hands'.<sup>41</sup> The work maintained its initial popularity with the public after its adaptation as an oratorio.

The performance of *Esther* in this manner appears to have spearheaded the development of early English oratorio. After this first oratorio performance, there followed in quick succession *Deborah and Barak* (Maurice Greene, 1732), *Judith* (Willem De Fesch, 1733), *Deborah* (Handel, 1733), *Athalia* (Handel, 1733) and *David's Lamentation* (William Boyce, 1736).<sup>42</sup> Just as *Acis and Galatea* could be called a masque when staged and a serenata when it was performed in costume but with no action, it seems to have been called an oratorio when it had none of these things. The first time this occurs was during the 1752-53 season, when the work was performed at the Haymarket on 4 April:

Oratorio by Mr. Handel. Benefit for Signora Frasi; To begin at 7 P.M.<sup>43</sup>

That the content of the libretto was not what would ideally be expected in an oratorio is indicated by the exactitude with which the use of the term was usually qualified; for example, in 1765, Retus, the anonymous author of the editorial in the *Gazetteer*, refers to the masque as a 'non-sacred oratorio'.<sup>44</sup> There was a precedent already in Handel's own works for the playing of a classical myth in this fashion, for his setting of Congreve's

*Semele* was advertised for its first performance on 10 February 1744 as 'Semele after the manner of an Oratorio'.<sup>45</sup> Things were still more clearly defined when *Acis and Galatea* was advertised for performance at Drury-Lane for 18 March 1772:

By Command of their Majesties. Performed as an Oratorio, though only a Serenata.<sup>46</sup>

The oratorio, as a larger and as a sacred form, was clearly considered more important. *The Theatrical Review* was still referring to the work in the same manner in its review of 1777<sup>47</sup> but the initial caution which attended the early use of the word oratorio soon disappeared and, by 1789, we find the air 'Heart the seat of soft delight' included in 'A Grand Selection of Sacred Music' at a performance at Covent Garden on 3 April.<sup>48</sup> similar concerts also included 'Consider fond shepherd', 'O the pleasure of the plains', 'Behold the monster Polypheme' and 'As when the dove'. Giving *Acis and Galatea* status as a quasi-sacred work can perhaps be attributed to the canonisation by the public of the piece itself, and of Handel in the late eighteenth century.

To some extent, the use of these titles discussed in this chapter reflects the changes in attitudes to staging and dramatic genre. The initial masque, pastoral and opera designations echo the debates and purposes of Congreve and Cibber in the first two decades of the eighteenth century which aimed at the establishment of an indigenous form with a status equal to that of Italian opera.<sup>49</sup> The use of the term serenata, referring specifically to the style of staging adopted by Handel in 1732, began at a time



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when clearly the public were ready to appreciate this style of representation, which was also to be found in their even greater enthusiasm for non-staged oratorio. As the century progressed, the popularity of this latter form gradually ensured that the masque (as it continued to be called in print) became firstly a 'non-sacred oratorio' then 'staged as an oratorio, although only a serenata' and, finally, simply as an 'oratorio'. There is obviously no doubt that different terms could be applied to the same work but the reasons for such different usages closely relate to the particular style of presentation, and the current fashions in theatrical forms, rather than the content of the libretto or the musical structure of the score.

This discussion is not intended to show that *Acis and Galatea* belongs only to one genre or that any one title should be used exclusively to describe the work. Rather, it is a survey of the range of possible interpretations of these titles to show the rationale behind the apparently inconsistent use of terms when, in fact, they were being used to emphasise different aspects of the same work.

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## Part II Directions

*Let yr: soft Ayre move in a murmuring Miane  
Divorce the windows & display the scene*

Thomas Jordan  
*Cupid, His Coronation*, 1654.

## II i Introduction

It is the purpose of this chapter to 'display the scene' of the later seventeenth-century masques written after 1639 until the 1690s. 1639 was the beginning of the end for Charles I, and was the year of the performance of the last Court masque before the Commonwealth; the 1690s saw fundamental changes occur as the form became primarily a public theatre genre.

1639 was a bad year for Charles I. It was then that the Scots signed a national Covenant designed to protect the Presbyterian Church from Charles's attempts to impose on it a new liturgy, based on the Book of Common Prayer; earlier attempts to achieve the same end had already ended in failure. The Covenant inspired the King to use military force, but he was as unsuccessful this time as he had been in his previous efforts, for the first battle was lost before Charles had even reached York. The events of 1639 also finished off the court masque; the last one to be performed was *Salmacida Spolia* by William Davenant, presented on 21 January 1640.<sup>1</sup> Davenant's masque was a work which 'is a *ballet à entrées*, with no fewer than 20 comic entries. The decline of the Jonsonian masque was complete...'.<sup>2</sup> In truth, the Jonsonian masque had ceased to exist

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after the break between Jonson and Inigo Jones after the presentation of *Chloridia* in 1631. After this date, lesser authors attempted to use many of his conventions, but the complex structure was gone.

Charles's position continued to deteriorate, and it was not the time, nor indeed, was it the climate, for such luxuries as masques. There were several political show-downs - the militia bill of 1641 was one, the Nineteen Propositions of the following year were another - and the Civil War, for which both the Royalists and the supporters of Parliament had had ample time to prepare, broke out towards the end of 1642. From the loss of the battle of Naseby in 1645, Charles suffered a series of defeats which culminated in his execution on 30 January 1649. He lost more than the battle at Chester, for the talented musician and composer of music for court masques William Lawes, was killed fighting for the Royalist cause. The establishment of the Commonwealth under the Protector, Oliver Cromwell, apparently ushered in an age of austerity in which the masque had little or no place. Or did it?

In 1639, masques can be divided into three broad categories, defined by function. Firstly, there were the grandiose Court masques with spectacular scenes, glorifying the monarch. These were large, probably lengthy events which could even involve, as a kind of upbeat, a procession around the city. Secondly, there were the small private masques which were intimate versions of the court form, but which did not necessarily glorify the monarch. Thirdly,

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there were the masques interpolated in spoken plays, miniaturized allusions to the first two varieties, which were usually related in some way to the drama in which they appeared.

Of these three types of masque, the Court version was obviously not a feature of Cromwell's administration. The third fell into abeyance when the theatres were closed, a closure which is frequently misrepresented, and although it was clarified by Percy Scholes as early as 1934, the point is worth making again.<sup>3</sup> The theatres were closed because the Puritans disapproved of the behaviour of the public, which they considered immoral. It did *not* apply to the plays or pieces themselves, which in any case, continued to be published. That this was also the view of the Protector is demonstrated by the performance of two pastorals at his daughter Mary's wedding at Hampton Court on 19 November 1657. In one of these, a dialogue for Cynthia and Endimion played by the bride and bridegroom, Cromwell himself is named in one source as having played Jove.<sup>4</sup>

The independent masques performed during the decade 1639 to 1649, are listed in Table II i 1, and are usually of the second type mentioned above. The surviving libretti are fragmentary, and the loss of all the music makes any assessment difficult - it should be pointed out here that only two complete masque texts survive, *Ragillo D'Oceano* by Mildmay Fane, and James Shirley's *The Triumph of Beauty*, performed at his own school in 1645. However, these works appear to represent a variety of masque forms.

The first work, *Ragillo D'Oceano* - probably the judgment of Oceanus - was performed at Apthorp in 1640.<sup>5</sup> It is the first surviving work of its author, Mildmay Fane (d 1666), and is his only full-length masque. It is arranged in 15 entries, with a prologue and epilogue, and has spectacular scenic effects. There is little music, but it has an enormous cast of around fifty people, and requires, among other things, fourteen rivers on stage at once, the personification of two rocks, two trees and two beasts, and six boys to play porpoises.

Its theme is opposition to change, one that Fane was to explore in his later plays. The central device is the discovery, or unmasking of the continent *Terra Australis*, at this point in history a land of unknown dimensions, only guessed at by explorers and cartographers. The masque date is 1640; the first Englishman to land in Australia did so in 1688. Oceanus embodies Fane's disapproval of change - in reply to a petition from the other Continents, he falsely leads them to believe that he will unveil her, but in fact, he gives them only a brief glimpse and sends them away, determined to keep the country to himself. The combination of the Continents, the Rivers and Oceanus himself, provides a large number of opportunities for the employment of transformations and other masquing techniques, but the device of the revels, in which the masquers interact with the spectators, has disappeared.

required to perform 'y<sup>e</sup> Mayn Masking Dance' were drawn from 1640 to when the work was presented.

The musical cues give us some idea of the forms and instrumentation used by the anonymous composer. During the discovery of the scene, we find that two Tritons awaken the Four Winds with their 'shell Trumpetts' and '*...the Lowde Musicke - A Hautboy, a Cornett, a Sagbutt and a double Curtault...*'. These later play 'an Antick high rough daunce' for the Tritons. The Continents are 'well pleased in a daunce played out by a sett of Recorders the stillest of the winde Instruments'. We later find '*Enter a SETT OF RECORDERS & play Severall Dances to y<sup>e</sup> Severall RIVERS*'. In the thirteenth entry, there is an attempt to make Terra Australis Incognita reveal 'Her self & State' by '*Three SYRENS of rare voyces to Theorbo & Lute are heard out of 3. Musicke rooms above to Invite by their ditties TERRA AUSTRALIS INCOGNITA...*'. At the opening of the last entry, Aryon enters on the back of a Dolphin '*...playing upon an harp studded w<sup>th</sup> Starrs &c*'. Orpheus consorts with Aryon, and they play together 'a Madrigall or Some Solemn grave Tune to w<sup>ch</sup> y<sup>e</sup> PRINCES descend Majestically'.

The surviving prologue of *A Mask at Witten* indicates a Summer presentation - 'Yet *Helicon* this Summer-time is dry' - and possibly a solely amateur performance. The work was probably written by those involved for their own amusement, and it reveals an interesting belief in the kingly nature of the sport:

Expect not here a curious River fine,  
Our Wits are short of that: alas the time!  
The neat refined language of the Court  
We know not; if we did, our Country sport  
Must not be too ambitious; 'tis for Kings,  
Not for their Subjects, to have such rare things.<sup>6</sup>

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From the titles of the three masques by Thomas Salusbury (d. 1643), at least the first two of these works seem to be comic in tone. They usurp the title 'antimasque', a nomenclature which is only wholly appropriate when there is a solemn masque to which the scene can be opposed. However, the chronology of these works suggests that it is possible that they are related to *A Mask at Knowsley*. Assuming this to be the correct solution, the masquing device of a progress, used sometimes as a metaphor for personal discovery within a masque, is possibly here being enacted by those to whom the masque is presented.<sup>7</sup>

As its source, Shirley's masque *The Triumph of Beauty* takes the story of the Judgment of Paris, a fable which was to play such an important role in the history of the masque in the next century. It has mainly spoken dialogue, and opens with a long anti-masque section. The mythological part of the masque is introduced by the appearance in the anti-masque scene of Paris, a bored shepherd. The appearance of Mercury to Paris, as though in a dream, prepares the way for the three goddesses, who are the result of a 'sacred change' represented by the celestial harmony of soft music. The goddesses petition Paris in speeches; his decision is followed by the appearance of Hymen and Delight who celebrate the resolution. The character of each of the three musical sections reflects this design: one is the rollicking song belonging to the anti-masque; the second is the celestial music and airs which accompany the appearance of the goddesses, and the last comprises the songs and

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dances which accompany the appearance of Hymen in the resolution at the end of the masque.

Clearly, only these small private masques could be those which continued to be presented during the Commonwealth between 1649 and 1659. There seem to be only seven such works; these are listed in Table II i 2.

The first masque is known only from its mention in *Perfect Passages*, the newspaper reporting the proceedings of the Protectorate:

On Saturday night last there was a masque at the Middle Temple, London; before it began the Benchers or ancients of the house were in the Hall and singing the 100 Psalm, which being ended every man drank a cup of Hipocras [sic], and so departed to their Chambers, then the young Gentlemen of that Society began to recreate themselves with civil dauncings and melodious musick. Many ladies and persons of quality were present.<sup>28</sup>

Both *Cupid, his Coronation* and *Fancy's Festivals* were written by the poet Thomas Jordan. They have several passages in common including the opening of the prologue:

If Musick, danceing, Poetry and Paynting  
ffree from scurrilitie or obscene ranting  
May please yo<sup>r</sup>: Apprehension, wee'l not feare  
To let the worst of our designe appeare  
And boldly bid you welcom for from hence  
Will issue onely Art and Innocence  
Wee shall shew nothing y<sup>t</sup> may wrong theise three  
Religion, Government or Modestie...<sup>29</sup>

It is a protestation of innocence of purpose, and of the virtue to be found in both libretti.



The *dramatis personae* of *Cupid: His Coronation* makes it an entirely suitable work for a group of young ladies and their tutors to perform. There is only one speaking role, that of the Priest of Apollo - 'who is the onely Speaker in the Masque, by way' - which could have been taken by a Master. There are the four allegorical characters of Peace, Plenty, Love and Prudence, there is the part of the god Cupid, and there is a range of small parts, such as the Nations, the 6 Vintorians (vintners) and the twelve virgins. It is organised as a series of four spoken entries, interspersed with allegorical transformations which contain all the music. The plan of these entries, together with most of the musical cues are listed in Table II i 3. The first entry, which sets the scene, and arranges for its discovery, opens with

....a soft Paven, played on y<sup>e</sup> Recorders, a Curtaine riseth, admitting y<sup>e</sup> discovery of a Frontispiece formed piramidically, beautified with the figures of Peace on the Right hand Plenty on the left, and Love more eminently placed in the medium...<sup>12</sup>

After what is essentially an introduction, the scene opens further, displaying 'Cupid, Peace, Plenty & Prudence...all danced singing in Chorus'. This is closed for the Second Entry which belongs to Plenty. Plenty is represented by the bounty of the vineyard, the 'firtilitie of Grapes'. However, the Vintorians are not Bacchanals, but are Masters of the vineyards, who will never be drunk. To suggest that this is directed at the young ladies performing in the masque is irresistible; when they are faced with a man, they will, with experience, be able to choose one who is temperate, for bounty combined with restraint is the nature of responsibility in man. The third entry contains national representatives of several nations,



each of whom is treated to a less than flattering description by the Priest of Apollo. The Dutchman for example is greeted with

What Goblin have we here, whose belly strutt  
as if he had a Navy in his Gutts.<sup>11</sup>

It is only the opening Englishman who is considered noble in heart, with love, honour, arms and arts. He has a short dance to reflect the order that he represents. At the end of the entry, the Nations dance together, and then quarrel, until calmed by Cupid's arrow. They embrace each other, and then to confirm the new order brought about by Cupid, 'fall into a grand Dance'. At the fourth entry all is ready:

Plenty w<sup>th</sup> vintage Prudence w<sup>th</sup> the Nations  
Appras'd by Love, have made fitt preparations  
ffor Peace to enter whose efforts we meane  
Shall glitter in the next [succeeding?] scene<sup>12</sup>

The scene thus prepared, Peace, Plenty and Prudence crown Cupid as their King. Each entry of this masque closes with the main theme or idea expressed in a song and a dance, followed by a symphony. Parallels are easily drawn with the current political scene. The essence of this work is a desire for peace, restraint, and serenity which is brought about by love.

The last speech is spoken by the Priest of Apollo, and shows that despite the political turmoil, the girls (or at least their masters) plan to continue their masquing activities:

But all the little Ladies bid me torn [sic]  
That they may know the Nature of y<sup>e</sup> doom  
Yet are resolv'd whether you play or Pave\*  
This is not the last Mask they mean to have  
They'l sing, they say, although like birds in bushes  
And the next Mask, shall [have] to hyde theyre blushes.<sup>13</sup>

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\*possibly a pavan, spelt 'paven' elsewhere in the

libretto - i.e. to play and dance.

Unfortunately, there is no evidence that they managed to do so.

For a school masque, the scenery is quite elaborate; we read of a curtain, both at the beginning and at the end, a free standing frontispiece, a set of shutters, the descent of Cupid while singing, and a glittering throne upon which 'twelve virgins appeare very gloriously attired'. Like the scenes and machines, the costumes, too, appear to have been fairly elaborate - apart from the aforementioned gloriously attired virgins, there are 6 embroidered robes with matching hats, and the members of different nations are presumably distinguished from each other by appropriate costumes.

Although the songs and music are indicated in the libretto, not even the song texts survive, and sadly, the only specific cue is that at the opening of the masque, 'A soft Paven...played on y<sup>e</sup> Recorders'. It is therefore unlikely that any of the music for the masque will ever be identified, although the composer of the music, such as it was, was probably Jordan himself. It is known that he composed music for the series of Mayoral pageants he organised for London during the Restoration.<sup>14</sup>

The later Jordan masque, *Fancy's Festivals*, was performed by 'many civil persons of quality' at an unknown venue, and is on a much larger scale, although not a grander one.<sup>15</sup> It reproduces material from *Cupid: His Coronation*, including some of the text of the

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opening speech which was used in the new 'Introduction', and the whole of the third entry, which was incorporated into the 'First Act'. 'Act' is the title given to the entries by Jordan on the reworking. Each of these 'acts' has a musical interlude towards the end, and songs scattered throughout the dialogue. The texts of the songs are now included in the libretto, which was '...newly printed/with many various and delightful New Songs, for the/further illustration of every Scene.', but it is unclear which were performed at the time, and which were added to the libretto on publication.

*Cupid and Death*, by virtue of its complete survival, is to us the most significant masque of the Commonwealth. With a text by James Shirley and a score by Christopher Gibbons, it was first presented on 26 March 1653, 'before his Excellencie, the Embassadour of Portugal'. This first performance was the result of the instruction of the Privy Council in 1652-3 to Sir Oliver Fleming to arrange an entertainment for the new Portuguese ambassador, although why remains unclear, since the previous incumbent had absconded leaving a pile of unpaid bills. A later production in 1659 seems to have taken place at the Military Ground in Leicester Fields, although Bernard Harris suggests that the venue was the meeting room of the house in the ground used by the Military Company.<sup>16</sup>

These circumstances give credence to the only serious interpretation so far offered of *Cupid and Death*. Maryann Cale

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McGuire, when considering Milton's *Comus* as a Puritan masque, shows convincingly that Milton's inversion, or perhaps, reappropriation, of Jonsonian masquing devices - light and darkness, virginity and unchastity, goodness and evil, controlled appetites and gluttony - are a blue print for a reform of the masque, which could be used to present Puritan ideals as efficiently as it had been used as a propaganda machine by the Royalists.<sup>17</sup> Following from this, we can see that the plan of the piece is essentially the same as the pre-Commonwealth Court masque, with scenes of disorder, followed later by scenes of order; but the disorder is represented by Royalist principles, while the Puritan ideal occupies the main masque. The Puritans had previously been figures of ridicule in masques such as *Britannia Triumphans* by William Davenant and William Lawes, where the anti-masque character of Imposture was dressed in Puritan garb.<sup>18</sup> On the other hand, the final resolution in *Cupid and Death* is achieved not by the god-man who is king, but by the intervention of divine powers. Instead of the divine king, the masque presents a human ruler governing with the powers of providence.<sup>19</sup> *Cupid and Death* is arranged in a series of entries; these do not survive in their original form, for some numbers were added for the 1659 performance. Dent suggests that Locke had taken over the music by this time, and that the apparent awkwardnesses that can be found in the score at the points where Gibbons's music was retained, are the results of Locke's new scheme of keys for the entries.<sup>20</sup>

When the monarchy was restored in 1660, the theatres reopened, and the interpolated masque returned to the public stage; also, the

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small private masques continued to be presented - all of these in schools - and the Court masque reappeared, albeit at irregular intervals. Commentators on the masque during this period usually state that it was not revived in its elaborate Court form after the Restoration, and that those works called 'masques' were really all-sung operas in miniature despite the lack of dramatic conflict.<sup>21</sup> There is a grain of truth concealed behind both these generalisations. Clearly, it would be pointless to deny that the Inigo Jones spectacles, mounted within the (by 1639) disintegrated conventions confirmed or established by Ben Jonson, finally ended with the downfall of Charles I. That this downfall can be partly attributed to the extravagance of the masque is indisputable, and it is the final irony in the whole sequence of events that led up to the monarch's demise, that it was through the window of a masquing hall that Charles I stepped onto the execution platform in 1649. It is, however, an absurdity to claim that those calling their pieces masques were unaware of the traditional functions of the genre and implications of the title. Such claims, found in studies of opera history, are usually made in a desperate effort to discover a significant operatic tradition in England, or to indulge in the musicological game of nominating the first 'true' English opera, or to find elements of masque in opera, rather than elements of opera in masque.

We know all too little about the traditions at the Restoration Court. The practice of performing a masque on Shrove Tuesday by the Ladies of the Court seems to have been adhered to erratically,

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judging by the performances listed in Table II i 4. There is however, no evidence to suggest that they were presented as a return offering to the gentlemen for an entertainment on Twelfth Night, as had been the pre-Commonwealth practice. There is very little information available about these events. No libretti have come to light, and the ambiguous diary entries made by Evelyn and others for some of the performances are unenlightening. Exactly what Evelyn saw on 2 July 1663, for example (see Table II i 4) remains unclear; his comment is unequivocal, yet the lack of collateral material raises the suspicion that it may have been a ball or a masquerade.<sup>22</sup> Not that such suspicion necessarily negates the entry - Evelyn refers to *Calisto*, a work undeniably in the Caroline masque tradition, by a variety of terms, none of them 'masque'.<sup>23</sup>

There is slightly more evidence relating to the performances of *The Queen's Masque* in February 1671; there were later performances on 20 and 21 February. Thomas Rugge recorded that

On Shrovetuesday at night there was a great Mask at Court, where the Countess of Castlemaine appeared in a dress of diamonds and precious stones.<sup>24</sup>

Lady Mary Beatie, writing to her niece Katherine Noel at Exton, refers to the 'grand ballett' which will be danced on Shrove Monday.<sup>25</sup> In a later letter, we find that Lady Mary was

at Court to see the grane ballett danced. It was so hard to get room that wee were forced to goe by four a clocke. though it did not begin till nine or ten. They were very richly [dressed] and danced very finely, and shifted their clothes three times. There was also fine musickes and excelent sing some new song made purpose for it.<sup>26</sup>

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The continuation of the letter makes it clear that the structured ballet (i.e. masque) was distinct from the revels, in which the King and the Dukes of York, Somerset and Buckingham danced. She too, mentioned the Countess of Castlemaine's jewels.<sup>27</sup> Only one dance survives which appears to be from this piece; it was included by John Playford in Musick's Handmaid, 'New LESSONS and INSTITUTIONS/FOR THE/Virginals or Harpsichord' of 1678.<sup>28</sup>

The big event for the Court in the decades after the Restoration was undoubtedly the masque of *Calisto*, presented on Shrove Monday and on Shrove Tuesday, 15 and 16 February 1675. The author John Crowne wrote it in response to a sudden 'Powerful Command', giving the speed of necessity as the reason for the inadequacy of the story.<sup>29</sup> The turn of events was awkward; he had 'to write a clear, decent, and inoffensive Play, on the Story of a Rape'. The musical entries were danced and sung by professionals; the dancers were directed by Josias Priest, while the singers included one of Charles II's mistresses, the retired actress Mary Davis, William Turner, who was later to compose the score and text of the masque *Presumptuous Love* in English (but musically 'after the Italian Manner'), and a 'Mr Hart', who was probably the composer James Hart, the moving force behind the performance of the later *Beauties Triumph* in 1676.<sup>30</sup> The Prologue is all sung, and as has been noted, is almost a masque in itself. Each of the five acts opens with spoken dialogue, and closes with the musical sequences. The latter do not relate to the plot as closely as those in *Cupid: His Coronation*, and in fact have a story-line of their own which moves

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forward only in those sections. In the broadest sense, however, they do reflect the actions of the spoken dialogue, the love of Daphne for Strephon contrasting with the desire of Jupiter for Calisto. In the final musical sequence, this theme is taken up by Daphne:

Must these be Stars? And to Heaven remove,  
Before they have tasted the pleasures of Love.  
That the Gods so ill, such Beauty should use!  
That mighty Cost must Nature lose?<sup>31</sup>

Sylvia replies:

I cannot so much Beauty show,  
But what I have, I'll better bestow.  
Not upon the Gods or Glories above,  
Nor empty Renown, but Pleasure and Love.  
Not pleasure but love, from pour hearts we'll be chasing,  
We'll kindle ourselves into Stars with embracing:  
We'll every moment our pleasures renew,  
Our Loves shall be flaming, and lasting and true.<sup>32</sup>

It is also important to remember here, that the loose connection with the text appears to be due to their having been forced upon Crowne:

The last, and not the least, difficulty imposed upon me in the Entertainment, was in the Chorusses; I was obliged to invent proper Occasions, to introduce all the Entries; and particularly, for the closing of all with an Entry of *Africans*.<sup>33</sup>

Seven songs survive from this masque - 'Alas poor shepherd', 'Augusta is inclined to fears', 'Joy, shepherd's joy', 'King lovers love on', 'No longer complain', 'Poor Corydon, thy flame remove', and 'Since all our grief' - but in melody and base lines only, and tell us little or nothing about its musical character.<sup>34</sup> The dances listed by Watkins Shaw as being in the library of Trinity College Dublin are claimed by that institution to have never been in their collection,<sup>35</sup> and, although the dances in the Drexel manuscript in

the New York Public Library are by Nicholas Staggins, there is no foundation for the claim that they belong to *Calisto*.<sup>36</sup>

There are three other masques of importance, private entertainments all of which took place in schools - these are listed in Table II i 5. The first is Thomas Duffett's masque *Beauties Triumph*, performed in 1676 at the girl's school in Chelsea. The school was run or owned by Jeffery Bannister and James Hart; Eric Walter White suggests that the masque may have been written to celebrate its opening.<sup>37</sup> That the treatment of the fable is 'delicate and refined' should surprise no-one - in its opening year as a boarding-school 'for young ladies and gentlewomen' some semblance of propriety had to be maintained.<sup>38</sup> It seems perverse to suggest Staggins as the composer of the music in this instance.<sup>39</sup> It is more logical that James Hart and Jeffery Bannister, both of whom are known as composers from at least one other later publication, were using the occasion to show what the school could offer. Several songs, shown in Table II i 6, have been located by the present author. The second, *Venus and Adonis*, is presumed to have been first performed at Court in about 1682. The actress Mary Davis again appears, this time in the role of Venus, while her natural daughter by Charles II, Mary Tudor sang the part of Cupid. The score also reveals that it was '*A Masque for y<sup>e</sup> Entertainment of y<sup>e</sup> King*'. It was divided into three acts - this was a term that had already been substituted for 'entry' in works such as *Fancy's Festival* - and had a sung French-style prologue and no epilogue. A newly discovered libretto reveals a later performance at Hart's and

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Bannister's school in Chelsea, now owned by Josiah Priest:

AN/OPERA/Perform'd before the /KING./Afterwards at/Mr. JOSIAS  
*PREIST's Boarding School/at CHELSEY.*<sup>40</sup>

Charles II died in 1685, putting an end to these not very vigorous attempts to perform masques at Court, although one cannot but regret the truth of Elizabeth Boswell's assertion that

...the Court stage was at its height during the first fifteen years of the period, - or, at least, that most money was spent on it during those years, - that James ordered plays aplenty but spent little on the theatre or production, and that William spent very little on anything.<sup>41</sup>

The last school masque in Table II 1 5 is a minor piece, presented in the October of 1697 at the boarding school at the manor of Besselsleigh in Oxfordshire. The school appears to have been established after the Restoration; it is recorded as flourishing in 1671 and 1694, but defunct a few years before 1717.<sup>42</sup> No libretto remains and the few songs - three uninteresting ones by Richard Goodson, and one stylish setting by John Weldon - are not illuminating.

This chapter has illustrated several aspects of the later seventeenth-century masque. Firstly, an empirical point, that masques continued to be written and presented during the Commonwealth. Secondly, that if the Puritans so chose, the form could function as an equally effective propaganda machine for their cause. Thirdly, that there was indeed a patchy revival of the

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independent masque at Court and in connected institutions after the Restoration.

And it was on the back of this last, rather feeble, tradition that aspects of Italian opera conventions entered England. The first appearance of Italian recitative is associated with Nicholas Lanier's music for the masques *Lovers Made Men* and *The Vision of Delight*, both presented in 1617. No music survives to verify this, and Emslie notes that the instruction only appears to relate to the 1640 editions; further suggesting that the music was not recitative at all, but declamatory air.<sup>43</sup> The first 'opera' so-called by its makers, *The Siege of Rhodes*, has been recently described as 'more properly called an all-sung masque', but yet again we are hampered in a true assessment of this piece, because no music survives.<sup>44</sup> The musical and dramatic organisation and some of the musical features of *Venus and Adonis* are French in origin, and are similar to those found in the later *Dido and Aeneas* performed in 1689, and possibly earlier as well.

The performance of private masques in this period came to an end in 1697, with the presentation of *Europe's Revels on the Peace of Ryswick*, the last masque listed in Table II i 6. It ushered in a new age for the independent masque. Although possibly first performed at Court, it was the first independent all-sung work to be performed on the public stage since the Restoration. It was one of the first masques which can be truly called a 'theatre masque' in the sense that it was designed for the public stage, as opposed

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to a miniaturized borrowing of masquing conventions inserted into a play; there are isolated theatre masques such as Thomas Middleton's and William Rowley's *The World Tost at Tennis* of 1638, but *Europe's Revels* signified a change in attitude and approach to the form which breathed new - or rather different - life into it. The main structural change required here was the permanent omission of the revels, and the consequent abandonment of any possibility of audience participation, although its ra-ra boom-bang plot owed something to the pre-Commonwealth Court masques. These characteristics, when combined with its indigenous associations and its all-sung nature, made the masque the ideal vehicle for later experiments in 'English opera'.

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## II 11 The Classical Masque

Sing all great Cythrea's Name  
Over Empire over Fame her Victory proclaim.  
Sing and Spread the joyful news around,  
The Queen of Love is Beauty Crown'd!

William Congreve  
*Judgment of Paris* 1701

## The Interpolated Classical Masque 1690-1701

Whilst the seventeenth-century masque flourished both interpolated in plays and in its own right, towards the end of the century, two new trends appeared which were to influence both the musical form and the dramatic shape of the genre in the eighteenth century. The first was the rise of 'dramatick opera' or 'semi-opera', rechristened the 'multi-media spectacular' by Judith Milhous, where the inset shows can be most usefully described as masques.<sup>1</sup> The second was the development of a masque form which, although still inserted in spoken plays, began to be performed as an interlude rather than as something set into the action proper. These latter pieces were all 'classical' masques, a genre which, for the purposes of this chapter, will be defined as one using deities from the classical pantheon, with or without extra allegorical figures, and with plots drawn from the myths which may or may not have contemporary relevance. Classical masques are also distinguished from masques in plays by a different internal organisation, an organisation which grew up in response to new circumstances and which is the basis for a discussion in the present chapter. The

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pattern of composition in these two trends can be found in Tables II ii 1 and II ii 2. Starting with 1690 - though, of course, the origins can be stretched back a decade - there is at least one new dramattick opera with masques performed each year until 1701. On the other hand, Table II ii 2 shows the sudden appearance of the classical masque as an interlude in 1697, preceded only by *The Rape of Europa by Jupiter*.

Hume has shown that this pattern of composition reflects the administrative problems of the London theatres during the 1690s and it would be appropriate here to reconsider some dates in this chronology.<sup>2</sup> 1690 was the year of the first performance of *Dioclesian*, the first dramattick opera since the performances of *Circe* at Dorset Garden in 1677. (The United Company's *Albion and Albanus* of 1685 was an all-sung opera, rather than a semi-opera.) After the financial disaster of *Albion*, an affair which Milhous has described as 'a grandiose over extension of means', it seems probable that the financial problems generated by this may have been responsible for barren years 1685 to 1689.<sup>3</sup> Not only were there no dramattick operas, there was only one new masque interpolated in a spoken play - which was probably not set or performed - compared with nine and eleven in the preceding decades, and some eighteen during the 1690s.

The next important date is 1695, the year that Thomas Betterton, unable to work with Christopher Rich, took the best singers and actors to the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields.<sup>4</sup> Rich was therefore

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left in control of Drury Lane and Dorset Garden, theatres built and equipped for lavish productions, whilst Betterton made do in the smaller theatre which was, in fact, a converted tennis court. The division in the repertoire shown in Tables II ii 1 and II ii 2 comes as no surprise, with the serious dramattick operas at Drury Lane and Dorset Garden, and the smaller all-sung masques appended to spoken drama at Lincoln's Inn Fields after 1695. Table II ii 2 also shows the comparative frequency of new masques interpolated in spoken plays during the same period.

Examples of late seventeenth-century interpolated masques show that most attempts to incorporate the masque into the action of spoken plays were fairly feeble. No less feeble were the similar attempts to integrate them into dramattick opera, although, as in the spoken plays, to what extent they relate to the action depends very much on the individual work. What constitutes 'dramattick opera' or 'semi-opera' is a problem here in itself. To put the question more colloquially, at what point does a play with music become a dramattick opera? Roger North supplies a succinct definition:

a sort of plays, which were called Operas but had bin more properly styled Semioperas, for they consisted of half Musick, and half Drama'.<sup>5</sup>

The suggestion of a 'half and half' division between music and text is a convenient way to describe this fairly fluid form; Robert Hume's generalisation that '..."opera" simply means drama with a considerable amount of added music, or a masque' cannot be sustained because simply adding a masque to a drama does not make dramattick opera; there must be more music than this.<sup>6</sup> Curtis Price,

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on the other hand, classes *The Indian Queen* as 'a tragic extravaganza', mentioning that it has less music than the semi-operas.<sup>7</sup> Probably the most useful term that has emerged in modern discussions is the 'multimedia spectacular', for it covers the plays with masques and songs, the early operatic experiments in the 1670s, and the later operas from the 1680s and 90s.<sup>8</sup> To this, Milhous adds an important caveat when she says that 'we must grant that the difference is one of degree rather than kind', and that what separates the operas from the plays is the scale of staging, a scale not technically available until after the completion of the Dorset Garden Theatre in 1671.<sup>9</sup> It is the term 'dramatick opera' that will be used in the following discussion to describe works in which music and spectacle on an extravagant scale plays a major role.

The centrepiece of dramatick operas was, of course, the masque. All the works listed in Table II ii 1 are in five acts and all have a grand masque which either closes the fifth act, or precedes a short closing speech. All have a smaller masque which either closes act two, or occurs almost at its conclusion. In the early dramatick operas of *Dioclesian* and *King Arthur* these were the only two masques to be found. The authors of *The Indian Queen* of 1695, *Cynthia and Endimion* of 1696 and *The Island Princess* of 1699 also limited themselves to these two masques. One precedent for the positioning for these two masques was the operatic version of *The Tempest* of 1674. Here, Thomas Shadwell added two masques to the original play; a masque of devils to close act two and the masque

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of Neptune and Amphitrite in act five, and *removed* Shakespeare's masque in act four.

With the production of *The Fairy Queen*, new ground was broken. As well as these established places for masques, there was a masque in the middle of act three and one towards the end of act four; after its revision in 1693, there was also the masque-like happening of drunken poets added to act one. Thereafter, the masques appeared in the middle of act three of the new *Brutus of Alba* (1696), *The World in the Moon* (1697), at the opening of act three of *The Grove* (1700), and further towards the end of act three of *The Virgin Prophetess* (1701). The act four masque was never an institution of quite the same order, occurring twice towards the middle of the act - *Brutus of Alba* and *The Grove* - and once towards the end - *The World in the Moon*. There is no doubt that however significant the masques may have been in themselves, or whatever artistic importance may now be attached to individual examples, the masques in acts one, three and four never had quite the same dramatic status as those in the original positions in acts two and five.

The odd work out here is John Dennis's *Rinaldo and Armida*, presented at the Lincoln's Inn Fields theatre in November 1698. In exile at the smaller theatre, Dennis's tragedy was an attempt to approach as closely as possible the larger scale works he was used to presenting at Dorset Garden and which Rich was now performing in profusion, although not always as successfully:

...the old Stages moulded a piece of Pastry work of their own, and made it a kind of Lenten Feast with their

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*Rinaldo and Armida*; this surpriz'd not only *Drury-Lane*, but indeed all the Town, no body ever dreaming of an *Opera* there; 'tis true they heard of *Homer's Illias* in a Nut-shel, and Jack in a Box, and what not?<sup>10</sup>

As may be surmised from this description, the masques themselves are smaller, resembling masques in plays, and reflect the limitations of the theatre. There are no dramatic transformations for instance; the most we find is that the '*Scene opens and discovers Fame, Heros and Heroines in the Clouds*' at the place where the act five grand masque would have normally been found.<sup>11</sup> Directions in other acts indicate that a flying machine and a trapdoor were in use, but these are the minimum one would expect. As Dennis says in the Preface:

*The Action is not only Regular in the Mechanism...but Decent too, I hope, in the Conduct of it; and (to the Rescue of the Machines to the necessity of the Subject oblig'd me) reasonable.*<sup>12</sup>

*Rinaldo and Armida* had just enough success to make Rich worried; Price and Hume attribute the commissioning of *The Island Princess* to Rich's desire for a riposte to Dennis and Eccles.<sup>13</sup>

Perhaps because of the limitations of theatre, the masques are more closely integrated into the action than others found in the extravaganzas, with the exception of perhaps *The Virgin Prophetess*, although Dennis, in remarking that 'all the Musick in this Play, even the Musick between the Acts, is part of the Tragedy, and for that Reason the Musick is always Pathetick' is either attempting to bury the inadequacies of the theatre under a dramatic ideal, or showing more interest in the drama than most authors of extravaganzas.<sup>14</sup>

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Dramatick operas and extravaganzas were a relatively short lived genre. Although some of the works mentioned in Table II ii 1 - *The Tempest*, *The Prophetess* and *The Island Princess* - remained in the repertoire during the early part of the century, there were only three new works of consequence produced. Two - *The British Enchanters* by Granville and Eccles and *The Wonders in the Sun*, a pasticcio with a text by D'Urfey - were performed close together in 1706 at the Queen's Theatre, and one - *Orestes* - as an isolated dramatick opera staged in the 1730s. Of these, the first was originally written for performance in the 1690s, and has the expected masques in acts two and five, with other interpolated songs and entertainments.<sup>15</sup> *The Wonders in the Sun* is of *The Brutus of Alba* mould - a masque-like entertainment in every act, with lots of residual instrumental music and no clear divisions between the spoken dialogue and the masque interpolations. Both these dramatick operas were staged as part of an effort by Vanbrugh at the Haymarket to counter the stolen *Arsinoe*, performed by Christopher Rich at Drury Lane.<sup>16</sup>

The dramatick opera *Orestes* was an isolated presentation by Lewis Theobald, and was apparently a more mature reflection on his earlier work:

... then, obsequious to a jingling Age, (When Rhyme, that  
Clog to Sense, usurp'd the Stage;) The Youthful Bard  
obey'd the Mode of course, And sacrific'd to Fashion half  
his Force.<sup>17</sup>

In *Orestes*, Theobald returns to the earlier integrated style of *Rinaldo and Armida* and, ignoring the by now defunct conventions,

has masque-like entertainments in each act with the exception of the fifth and last. Theobald's final claim is that the music and other 'Charms in aid' have been used to inspire an emotional reaction in the audience.<sup>19</sup> It is Henry Fielding's epilogue, however, which reveals that Theobald may have revived the ideas of the first two decades of the century when, as will be discussed in Chapter II iv, those writing masques did so in an attempt to advance the cause of opera in English:

*But 'tis, alike, each Author's darling Care  
To recommend his Labours to the Fair.  
Our Author this attempts by various Strains,  
Love for soft Hearts, --- and Musick for soft Brains.*

*Ladies, be kind, and let his Pleas stand good;  
Condemn not Both, because they're understood.  
Once in an Age, at least, your Smiles dispense  
To English Sounds, and Tragedy that's sense.  
These are Variety to you, who come  
From the Italian Opera, and Tom Thumb.*<sup>20</sup>

Returning to Betterton and the Lincoln's Inn Fields masques, the desire of the company to continue using its singers and to provide musical entertainments to attract the public - as the Preface tells us - spawned the group of masques which can be referred to more properly as afterpieces and interludes.<sup>20</sup> As always, their relationship to the spoken play varies from masque to masque: *Ixion* was quite closely integrated into *The Italian Husband*; *The Loves of Dido and Aeneas* into *Measure for Measure*; *The Loves of Mars and Venus* had little to do with *The Anatomist*, while the play *The Mad Lover* has not survived. And although there is no evidence that the earlier interpolated masques were never used in dramas other than those for which they were written, it seems unlikely that they could have been easily adapted for use elsewhere. The afterpiece,

on the other hand, could be (and was) played with any drama that was being performed at the time.

Among the resulting changes was a lengthening of the masque, and the tendency to use a more detailed plot. Masques such as these sometimes had a sub-plot as well which was usually comic, such as that found in *Acis and Galatea*, where Motteux adds the tale of the 'loves of Roger and Joan'. In some cases, such as in *The Loves of Mars and Venus*, the masque was divided into interludes, so that it could be played in the intervals of plays of three acts or more. Sometimes, just one interlude would be played, and at others only the comic subplot would be used.

The first masque which can be said to have been written as a separate interlude is *Hercules* of 1697, and from then until 1703, interpolated masques and interludes appear with almost equal frequency, as can be seen from Table II ii 2. What can also be seen from this table is that, while it was Lincoln's Inn Fields that concentrated on the interlude, it was Drury Lane that continued presenting new masques in spoken plays; Rich reserved Dorset Garden for the production of the multi-media spectaculars. There are, of course, exceptions to this generalization, but these are interesting ones: *The Loves of Dido and Aeneas* of 1700 was merely an alteration of Purcell's so-called 'school' opera, while the *Secular Masque* was a deliberate commission from Dryden to combat the dramattick operas at Dorset Garden.<sup>21</sup> *Hercules* is contained in Motteux's *The Novelty* and erroneously listed by Price as being a

masque 'inserted in a play'.<sup>22</sup> *The Novelty* is not a 'play', but is an entertainment consisting of a conglomeration of individual acts, each one being used as a show case for different dramatic forms.

The title page leaves no doubt as to the work's structure:

THE/NOVELTY./Every Act a Play./BEING/A Short Pastoral,  
Comedy, Masque, Tragedy,/and Farce after the *Italian*  
manner...<sup>23</sup>

and the masque of *Hercules* forms the third act of this entertainment. Hume, too, is mistaken in his assessment of this piece: as the part of the legend used is that in which Hercules is given a vest and shirt spun by Omphale which subsequently consumes him by fire, it is inconceivable that it can ever have been 'a delicious little masque in a comic mode'.<sup>24</sup> Genest describes *Hercules* as 'a very poor masque'<sup>25</sup> and *A Comparison between the Two Stages*, says that 'ev'ry word [was] stolen and then damn'd'<sup>26</sup> - both of these sum up the work with more accuracy.

Congreve's *Judgment of Paris* was written with a particular aim in mind but, even so, it cannot have been designed, in whoever's setting it might have been given, to stand alone. Subsequent performances of the Eccles and Weldon scores were as part of longer programmes,<sup>27</sup> as was that of Franck's setting, performed in a concert at York Buildings on 2 February 1702. As a skillful librettist, Congreve cannot have expected that the work would occupy a whole evening; even Arne's generous setting of 1742 with its immensely long *da capo* trio for Juno, Pallas and Venus, runs for only just over three-quarters of an hour. Hume includes the masque *Europe's Revels* in his consideration of these interludes

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but, although this work is by the team of Motteux and Eccles, who had already collaborated on other interludes, it was intended for independent performance at Court.<sup>23</sup> When it appeared in the theatre, both in the 1690s and then again about 1706, it was always performed as an afterpiece.

From 1703 onwards, nearly all masques can be described as interludes or afterpieces; there are only a dozen or so works which were full-length and only one - Arne's *Comus* - which can be considered to have been a box office success.

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### Forms and Operatic Experiments in 1700

The theatrical and administrative developments outlined above altered the masque form; the general rule was the bigger the masque, the less relevant it was to the action of the play or opera in which it was interpolated. Indeed, in several aspects of composition it now began to resemble more closely the old independent form. There was the need to create the scene of the masque and to resolve the allegorical proposition within the masque itself rather than relying on the text of the play to do these things. There was now a series of entries between these two points, entries akin to those in independent masques but which were previously not part of the interpolated masque tradition. Lastly, there was a marked increase in the scale of the musical requirements, including the provision of an overture and a more formal grand chorus. This increased size and independence sowed the seeds for the competition held in 1700 to find the composer who could provide the best setting of William Congreve's masque text *The Judgment of Paris*; without these developments, there would have been no worthwhile musical demands to which the composer could respond.

These developments can be seen in varying degrees in contrasting interpolated masques from the end of the century; the Act IV masque from *The Fairy Queen* set by Henry Purcell, *The Four Seasons or Love in Every Age* set by Jeremiah Clarke and performed in that great

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theatrical and box office success *The Island Princess* or the *Generous Portuguese* by Pierre Motteux, and Dryden's *Secular Masque* written for performance in a new version of John Fletcher's *The Pilgrim*, with music by Daniel Purcell and Gottfried Finger.

*The Fairy Queen* is something of a mystery work. Who adapted Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to create this operatic extravaganza is not known - Dryden, Settle and Betterton have all been proposed with varying degrees of likelihood, and, as Roger Savage points out, it may have been a committee effort.<sup>29</sup> After the 1692 performances, which appear to have been financially unrewarding, it was revised and restaged the following year with no more success.<sup>30</sup> Further, the 1693 score was lost fairly soon afterwards, and did not resurface again until about 1900.<sup>31</sup>

The adaptation of *The Fairy Queen* resulted in the addition of the series of masques to Acts II, III, IV and V. All are of interest here, but it is that in Act IV, the masque of the four seasons, which is most relevant. Its broad plan can be found in Table II 11 3. Like *The Four Seasons* from *The Island Princess*, the masque concerns fertility and uses the physical attributes of the seasons themselves to suggest sensual pleasures. The masque is probably less relevant to the action than those in the other acts. Oberon remarks:

Titania, call for Musick

She replies:

Let us have all Variety of Musick

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All that should welcome up the rising Sun.<sup>32</sup>

In as much as Act IV deals with the night before 'these lover's Nuptial Day', Savage's interpretation of the masque is as a fertility and a sensual order rite; *the masque is therefore a* reflection of the action.<sup>33</sup> However, while not denying this thematic connection, it cannot be advanced as a major structural point.

After the above exchange between Titania and Oberon, the scene of the masque is discovered in a spectacular transformation:

The Scene changes to a Garden of Fountains. A Sonata plays while the Sun rises, it appears red through the Mist, as it ascends it dissipates the Vapours, and is seen in its full Lustre; then the Scene is perfectly discovered, the Fountains enrich'd with gilding, and adorn'd with Statues: The view is terminated by a Walk of Cypress Trees which lead to a delightful Bower. Before the Trees stand rows of Marble Columns, which support many Walks which rise by Stairs to the top of the House; the Stairs are adorn'd with Figures on Pedastals, and Rails; and Balasters on each side of 'em. Near the top, vast Quantities of Water break out of the Hills, and fall in mighty Cascades to the bottom of the Scene, to feed the Fountains which are on each side. In the middle of the Stage is a very large Fountain, where the Water rises about twelve Foot.<sup>34</sup>

However, Roger Savage points out that these elaborate scenic devices are not referred to either in the spoken text or in the action of the masque, but follow textual cues which suggest lighting effects.<sup>35</sup> The stage description this masque refers to a sun rising, while an attendant on one of the seasons sings:

Now the Night is chac'd away  
All Salute the rising Sun;<sup>36</sup>

This effected,

A Machine appears, the Clouds break from before it, and Phoebus appears in a Chariot drawn by four Horses; and

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*Sings.*<sup>37</sup>

and the chorus of seasons and attendants welcomes the god. The seasons then offer to Phoebus the fruits that they have produced with his help. The exception is Winter, who comes for renewal, and the assumption that Spring will follow is emphasised by the repeat of the first chorus 'Hail! Great Parent of us all', and represents the cyclic nature of the year. A final dance of the four seasons confirms this resolution. The proposition in the discovery of the scene of the masque - that Phoebus gives light and comfort to the Earth - is represented by the entries or songs of each season, and these pave the way for the resolution which is an affirmation of Phoebus's power in both song and dance.

*The Island Princess* was concocted by Pierre Motteux, who carved up Nahum Tate's altered version of Fletcher's original play. The exact date of its first performance at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane is unknown, but Price and Hume suggest that it was no earlier than 4 February 1699.<sup>38</sup> The date of the masque itself is even less certain, for the libretto reads:

*This Entertainment is perform'd at the End of the last Act, but was design'd for another Season, and another Occasion:*<sup>39</sup>

The author goes on to suggest that what has been 'mar'k thus (") is omitted', but though the details are irrelevant here, some of what is marked as such is included in this new setting.<sup>40</sup> Assuming that line 16 and its attendant note do not indicate later alterations, the date must be after 21 November 1695, the date of the death of Henry Purcell:

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While your\* *Amphion* plai'd, and Sung, \* Mr. *Henry*  
 Your *Thebes* in decent Order sprung. *Purcel.*  
 Let harmony be thus employ'd  
 To raise what Discord has destroy'd.<sup>41</sup>

There are other questions and interesting circumstances surrounding the performance of *The Island Princess*, including the issue of why Motteux wrote it for Drury Lane at all, when his material had previously been associated with the rival house; some of these issues are touched upon, although by no means fully considered, by Price and Hume.

Unlike *The Fairy Queen*, the masque occurs outside the act, although reference is made to it in the final speech:

King: Let Music now resound. Begin the Sports  
 To entertain our Court...  
 You must have time to calm the stormy Bliss.  
 Then leave awhile the bright Assembly here  
 To Mirth and soft delights.  
 We'll ease with Talk our Pangs of Joy within.<sup>42</sup>

The cast then retires, and the masque is played between the end of the act and the epilogue. The distinction between the discovery of the scene of the masque - see Table II ii 5 - and the scenes presented to Apollo by the Four Seasons is made more prominent by the abrupt change from the allegorical characters and high-flown sentiments to the earth bound (and earthy) characters, who are assigned dialogues full of innuendo. The scene of the masque, as suggested by the Genius of the Stage, is the London Stage after the effects of the theatrical war had been felt. The Genius of the Stage longs for the 'summers's warm return' - the return of those who departed with Betterton to Lincoln's Inn Fields:

Thy darling Guests, thy fair, thy best Supports,  
 For rival Fields forsake our lovely Sports:

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We grieve alone, while Birds and Shepherds Sing  
Alas, we bear a Winter in the Spring.<sup>43</sup>

Apollo arrives to relieve the general gloom - it can have only been a temporary depression inspired by the success of Dennis's *Rinaldo and Armida*, since the years between 1694-5 and 1698 were marked by a string of successes for Rich - and summons the four seasons to

Show now, that as Love in all Ages can warm,  
So Harmony here in all Seasons can charm.<sup>44</sup>

Apollo and the Genius retire, as the four seasons are discovered on four several stages.

Four entries follow, each 'appropriate to the season'. Each entry consists of a dialogue, followed by a pantomimed dance reflecting the sentiments of the preceeding text. Thus in the first entry, the trials of the young lovers, the first stolen kisses and the guilty cries for 'mother' are lifted onto a higher plane by the stylised dance of the girls with nosegays and the corresponding young sparks who 'make love to them'. This format is repeated on the three following occasions, each dance proving to be a confirmatory allegory of the scene we have just witnessed.

The resolution of the masque is effected by Cupid who arrives to explain that love is sweet in every age and every season. In light of the material presented by the Genius of the Stage in the opening sequence, the last two lines:

None are Truer, none are Sweeter,  
When Discretion guides the Choice.<sup>45</sup>

clearly leave themselves open to the interpretation as commentary

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on the behaviour of the departing actors. The final Grand Dance occurs between two statements of the Grand Chorus 'Hail god of desire', and serves as the confirmation of the final resolution of the masque.

Dryden's *Secular Masque* has a similar context in *The Pilgrim*, for it also occupies the end of the last act, and almost as an afterthought by one of the main characters:

Governor: I hope before you go, Sir, you'll share with us, an Entertainment the late great Poet of Our Age prepar'd to Celebrate this Day. Let the Masque begin.<sup>46</sup>

As Dryden was dead before the third performance took place, the surviving lines were clearly an adaptation of those that must have heard at the first performances.<sup>47</sup> The alterations to *The Pilgrim* had been commissioned by Thomas Betterton:

The Battel [between the playhouses] continued a long time doubtful and Victory hovering over both Camps, *Batterton* Sollicits for some Auxiliaries from the same Author [as the other house; Shakespeare], and then he flanks his Enemy with *Measure for Measure*...faith we'll e'en put the *Pilgrim* upon him---ay faith, so we will, says *Dryden*, and if you'll let my Son have the Profits of the *Third Night*, I'll give you a *Secular Mask*:<sup>48</sup>

The word 'secular' here is used by Dryden in the sense of once a century or at the turn of an era, and, indeed, the work was performed on New Year's Day, 1700.<sup>49</sup>

The plan of the *Secular Masque* shown in Table II ii 6 centres the three main entries - those of Diana, Mars and Venus. The opening section establishes the scene of the masque, presents the main attributes of the three opening characters and culminates in a

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chorus. During this sequence, it is established that Janus presents the masque to Momus, in an effort to persuade him that the past era has been worthwhile:

Janus: Since *Momus* comes to laugh below,  
Old Time begin the Show,  
That he may see, in every Scene,  
What Changes in this Age have been,

Chronos: Then Goddess of the Silver Bow begin.<sup>51</sup>

This is followed by the three entries - Diana the huntress, Mars the warrior, and Venus the goddess of love - and each presents a positive account of their contribution to world affairs during the preceding age. Momus steps forward at the end to provide the resolution of the piece:

Momus: All, all, of a piece throughout  
Thy Chase had a Beast in View;  
Thy Wars brought nothing about;  
Thy Lovers were all untrue.  
'Tis well an Old Age is out  
And Time to begin a New.<sup>51</sup>

This is followed by a Grand Dance confirming that "'Tis well an old age is out, and time to begin anew". The masque can also be read as a complex political allegory, which is discussed in detail in Appendix III.

The effect on the music of the dramaturgic development illustrated by these works can be imagined. Masques became musical extravaganzas, used as the climax to acts and to the work itself. The keys began to be closely related. The independence from the main piece offered the possibility of an overture, and consequently the orchestration ceased to be simply a small string band, and began to include trumpets and timpani. Not content with just adding

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an overture, the size of the symphonies within the masque expanded, as did the scale of the airs.

It was in the context of the development of this larger masque, that the well known advertisement appeared in *The London Gazette* on 21 March 1700:

Several persons of quality having for the encouragement of musick advanced 200 guineas to be distributed in 4 prizes, the first of 100, the second of 50, and the third of 30, and the fourth of 20 guineas to each master shall be adjudged to compose the best. This is therefore to give notice that those who intend to put in for the best. This is therefore to give notice that those who intend to put in for the Prizes are to repair to Jacob Tonson at Grays Inn gate before Easter next day, where they may be further informed.<sup>52</sup>

Citing this advertisement, Lincoln and others have, somewhat obviously, suggested that the motivation behind the competition was the desire for the 'encouragement of Musick'.<sup>53</sup> Lincoln continues:

The contest for the best setting of Congreve's *The Judgment of Paris* is most truly understood, then, as a valiant attempt on the part of conservative Londoners to continue a glorious tradition which began to decline at the death of the English Orpheus, Henry Purcell.<sup>54</sup>

There are several curious features about the whole event, and what particular 'encouragement' was required, and what 'musick' the competition hoped to produce needs to be considered at the outset. The assertion that all theatre music ceased with the death of Purcell has been discredited by Fiske, who has shown that far from there being less music written for the theatre after Henry Purcell's death, there was more.<sup>55</sup> It cannot, then, have been the intention of the competition to inspire a simple increase in the number of dramattick operas, or the amount of incidental music

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written by English composers. It has been suggested by many scholars before and after Lincoln, that it was an attempt to improve the quality (as opposed to the quantity) of the music written for the playhouses.<sup>56</sup> This argument, however, assumes that the music currently being written was of low quality - which it was not, and does not seem to have been considered to be so - and that a competition would inspire composers already working in the playhouses to write music of greater stature - which is absurd. Nor is the theatrical chaos which followed the rebellion of the actors against Christopher Rich sufficient to explain it.<sup>57</sup> Rich's efforts at Dorset Garden may have been vulgar, but the same charge cannot be laid against his work at Drury Lane, or against the new Company at Lincoln's Inn Fields under Thomas Betterton. Further, the claim that Congreve was a logical choice to write the libretto cannot be sustained.<sup>58</sup> Although he had had early successes, his last play, *The Way of the World* of 1699, had been badly received, and while he may have 'turned his creative gifts to musical ends', *The Judgment of Paris* was his first attempt at such a piece.

In considering these points, some consideration of the patrons involved in the competition is enlightening.<sup>59</sup> Those we know by name that can be connected with the competition are Charles Seymour, Duke of Somerset, and Charles Montagu, Lord Halifax. It is possible that the dedicatee of Daniel Purcell's score, Anthony Henly and Wriothesley, Second Duke of Bedford, a patron of Weldon, were also involved in the preparations. Halifax, Eccles's patron, was a successful politician holding among other offices, the post

of the first Lord of the Treasury. At the time of the competition, his political life was coming rapidly to an end, as accusations of corruption became more frequent, and his role in the Partition Treaty came into question. His employment of artistic patronage - Congreve was one of his beneficiaries - was scoffed at by Swift and Pope, who both thought that it was empty and unhelpful, and that it was part of Montagu's political power base. Weldon's patron Bedford was already part of the retinue, and we find his patronage in later events; for example, we find an account to him from Weldon for an entertainment at Woburn dated 26 March 1701, that includes sums for dressers, 'shoose', a 'wig for y<sup>e</sup> girl', a 'porter to carry the cloes for the Singers' and 'For Coach Hire, wine and other Neccesaries'.<sup>50</sup>

Lincoln's interpretation of the competition is one of several that assumes it to have been of a laudable, if not philanthropic nature, with high artistic ideals.<sup>51</sup> However, there was clearly something more personal in the way the competition was organised, as Roger North indicates:

There was a musically adventure which served for a *preludium* to the latter Operas, which was called the Prize Musick, of which onely a word or two. A contention sprung up among the Quality in towne, who was the greatest master. Some were for one and some for others, and at last they agreed to make a subscription, and divers of the Masters should have their nights.<sup>52</sup>

Despite the claim of the piece to be a competition based on the relative beauty of three goddesses, the story of *The Judgment of Paris* as presented by Congreve, is one decided on the merits of the music, for Paris yields not to physical attributes of any one

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goddess, but to the beauty of Venus' singing:

I yield, I yield, O take the Prize,  
And cease, O cease, th' enchanting Song;  
All Love's Darts are in thy Eyes,  
And Harmony falls from thy Tongue.<sup>63</sup>

There is also the possibility of a rigged vote, for it was acknowledged at the time, the first choice of John Weldon's setting was a surprise. As North goes on:

the tryalls being over, the subscribers judged by voting;  
the sentences were not thought limpid and pure.<sup>64</sup>

It is my purpose here to argue that the competition began as an attempt at a public settlement of a private dispute between 'the Quality in Towne', and the resulting 'encouragement' of independent works that were sung throughout in English was to no avail.

It is the involvement of the publisher Jacob Tonson that suggests a context. Tonson was the primemover behind the celebrated Kit-Kat Club, to which all those connected with the competition, including Congreve, belonged. No date for the founding of the Club can be given with any exactitude, but it was certainly in existence by 1700.<sup>65</sup> By 1704, Tonson, who was secretary, acquired the lease of the home of Barn Elms in which the Club thereafter met. Its members had theatrical connections as playwrights, patrons and theatre-goers, and Tonson's publishing activities in this field continued unabated. It was to the Club's members that Thomas D'Urfey dedicated the English opera *The Wonders in the Sun* in 1706:

To the Right, Honourable and Ingenious Patrons of *Poetry,*  
*Musick, &c. The Celebrated Society of the Kit-Cat-Club.*<sup>66</sup>

Burney would have us believe that the Club's members were involved

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in the writing of it and that it was

furnished with the words of many of its songs, by the most eminent wits of the age, who lent the author their assistance.<sup>57</sup>

Tonson was also known to have given financial handouts to poets including Dryden, and it is probable that either he, or the Club as a whole put up the money for *The Prize*.

Apart from the desire to manipulate the composers into competition with one another, a sidelight on the choice of the story and the casting of the performance is offered by Congreve in a postscript to a letter to Keally, in which he writes with characteristic discretion 'Our friend Venus performed to a miracle'.<sup>58</sup> The extent of Congreve's relationship with the actress Anne Bracegirdle, who created the role of Venus and was clearly 'our friend', has always been a matter for speculation: Jonathan Swift, Colley Cibber and the author of *A Comparison* all mention her virtue and discretion, but in such terms as to imply that there was some doubt as to whether she was acting or whether it was real.<sup>59</sup> The details are, perhaps, beside the point since Congreve spent a great deal of time with her, and clearly considered her to be a good actress and desirable company.

Why Congreve chose the masque form for the competition is indicated by the foregoing discussion. That the masque had become a larger musical form usually sung throughout made it an ideal vehicle for composers to show off their respective talents. Attempting to use a libretto of the type of the 1696 version of *Brutus of Alba* would

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have required too much music, would have only offered piecemeal possibilities for the composer and would been too elaborate to be judged in the way the organisers intended. The role Lincoln suggests for Eccles - that he worked with Congreve on the details of the verse - seems unlikely, and there is a whiff of corruption in the notion that the poet influenced the composer's choice of form.<sup>70</sup>

*The Judgment of Paris* is opened by Mercury:

From high Olympus and the realms above  
Behold I come, the messenger of Jove.<sup>71</sup>

He addresses the shepherd Paris, who indentifies Mercury by his 'winged Heels and Head'. Mercury produces the golden apple for which the three goddesses Juno, Pallas and Venus contend; as they appear Paris takes the apple. It is not clear to what Paris is referring when he sings

O ravishing delight!  
What mortal can support the sight?<sup>72</sup>

While it has been assumed that the 'sight' is that of the three goddesses, in fact he has just received the golden apple, and the sense of this passage could equally be that Paris is blinded by the fruit rather than the deities. Nothing that occurs subsequently contradicts this alternative reading. Mercury promises to protect Paris who takes heart; he is now protected by the charms of Mercury's rod, and realises that the human condition is one to be cherished. *Mercury ascends*, leaving Paris with the task of deciding who is the most beautiful. They make their respective claims. Juno, who is clearly a blackmailer at heart, threatens him from her

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position as the wife of Jove. Pallas, the 'virgin Goddess free from stain', reminds him no less imperiously that she is the Queen of arts and arms. Venus, however, is slightly more subtle than the other two, and suggests that, as love rules them and she rules love, 'Venus rules the Gods above' and is therefore the all powerful one. Paris is unable to decide. After all, they all have their clothes on, and these could conceal anything; beauty of face will not be the only criterion here. The Goddesses, now naked, offer him their gifts in a less disguised manner; Juno, boundless power in exchange for his shepherd's crook, Pallas, triumph in battle and Venus, Helen of Troy. The masque resolves when he selects Venus, the 'Goddess of Desire', hoping that she will be propitious to his love. The masque ends with a general chorus. The form of *The Judgment of Paris*, found in Table II ii 7, is once again that which was established in the 1690s; the scene of the masque, or its proposition, followed by a series of entries, and concluding with the resolution, in this case the 'judgment' of the title.

The composers of the three surviving settings approached their task in different ways and the results have a variety of shortcomings. Eccles's and Purcell's settings both survive in printed score in the British Library; the former is available in facsimile. Weldon's is in manuscript in the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington. Lincoln and Fiske have both briefly discussed the three scores; the former favours Weldon's,<sup>73</sup> while Fiske admits to the merits of Eccles's.<sup>74</sup> To take the key schemes first. As Table II iv 8 shows,

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there is a similarity in the harmonic patterns of Purcell and Weldon. Eccles, however, has attempted something quite different, in which

The first half pulls us way around the dominant side of the circle of 5ths, and then we are slowly led back to the subdominant and return home for the judgment and final chorus. Such overall harmonic planning was rare in its day and nothing like it is to be found in the other scores.<sup>75</sup>

Here, Lincoln misses the point. While this may be 'progressive', Eccles has superimposed an inappropriate series of keys on an archaic form, while both Purcell and Weldon attempt to reflect the form - there is, clearly, evidence of 'overall harmonic planning', but it is perhaps not of the kind that Lincoln set out to find.

For example, the opening sequence of the masque progresses from Paris's initial shock of being approached by Mercury, through the God's reassuring 'Fear not mortal' to the joyful duet 'Happy thou of human race'. Eccles makes no tonal distinction between these different airs. Nor does he attempt to delineate the goddesses on their first entry, which runs aground on a sandbank of A Major at 'This way mortal turn thy eyes' from which it does not break free until 'Let ambition fire thy mind'. In Eccles's setting, the three goddesses are well delineated on their second appearance in the key structure, Juno's music being in d minor, Pallas singing in D Major and Venus in g minor. This scheme reaches G Major when Paris cries 'I yield, I yield, O take the prize', and the cycle returns to D Major with the final chorus.

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The key of Purcell's overture is also D, but when this is over, the piece moves first to d minor, then to a minor, and then to C Major. Here, Purcell has used the bright key of D for Mercury's arrival, pushed it to d minor for Paris's 'O ravishing delight' and his appeal 'O help me Hermes' set Mercury's reassurance 'Fear not mortal' in a minor, and arrives triumphantly in C major for their duet 'Happy thou/I of human race'. As in Eccles's setting the three goddesses are each given a different key on their first entry, and as in Weldon, he returns to the minor for Paris's 'Distracted I turn'. Purcell then embarks on a new set of keys - A Major, D Major and a minor - for the second attempt on Paris by Juno, Pallas and Venus. Both Purcell and Weldon move to the major - D and Eb respectively - for Venus's 'Nature fram'd thee sure for loving', the air which bewitches Paris.

Weldon's key structure on the other hand, is by far the most interesting, though whether by accident or design is unclear. Margaret Laurie complains of Weldon's inability to escape from the C Major/minor alternation, a charge which can clearly be levelled at *The Judgment of Paris*.<sup>76</sup> However, he seems to have manipulated it to some purpose here. The opening section moves in a similar manner to Purcell's, starting in a major key, moving to a minor key for the meeting with Paris, and then moves to the major. Both composers chose c minor to delineate Venus's character in 'Hither turn thee', but only Weldon bothered to return to this at 'Stay lovely youth' and 'One only joy'. He also chose c minor for Paris's 'Distracted I turn' and 'I yield, I yield', highlighting the

relationship between the two characters. Unfortunately, he does not continue with his initial idea - D Major for Juno, C for Pallas and c minor for Venus - and in retrospect, seems to have been simply a convenient series of related keys to move back to the comfort of the oscillation between C Major and c minor. This failing has the curious result that about three fifths of the music is in these tonalities.

Lincoln feels that Purcell's chief fault, or at least deficiency in this particular score, is his repetitive use of a single aria formula and the outmoded ground bass technique; these seem relatively minor faults when compared with the amount of superfluous incidental music that Purcell allowed to choke up the action.<sup>77</sup> Fiske merely remarks that he 'emphasised the orchestra at the expense of the singers', but in fact he has destroyed any sense of pace the work may have had.<sup>78</sup>

In the first series of entries in which goddesses appear, each is preceded by a symphony; in Congreve's libretto, the three arrive together, so such music is not required to cover their individual entries. The first, that which accompanies Juno, is a sixteen bar rapid string symphony, which introduces F major, the key Purcell uses for Juno's entry. The symphony which accompanies Pallas has become a fully fledged three movement trumpet sonata in C, with a c minor middle section which rests the trumpet. After this excess, it is with relief that the symphony of flutes for Venus proves to be a sixteen bar introduction to her air 'Hither turn thee gentle

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swain'. Apart from the symphonies themselves, their length is highlighted by the comparative brevity of the introductory airs sung by the goddesses. The action moves to the trio, where Purcell, perhaps not surprisingly in view of the ineptitude he has so far shown in pacing this work, misses an opportunity for a grand theatrical gesture. After a very short 4/4 section in C Major, the time signature abruptly changes to 3/4 and to G Major, and rapidly returns to C. The whole is only some thirty bars long, and ends with yet another superfluous symphony. At this point, the action picks up as we move rapidly through Juno's thunderous attempts to influence Paris. As soon as Pallas enters, the problems resurface, and Congreve's comparatively simple text is set by Purcell in an entry consisting of an air, a small symphony, another air, another symphony, a third air and a final chorus. This distorts any sense of competition between the three goddesses by making them unequal before Paris even begins to consider their offerings.

This is in marked contrast to Eccles's setting, where there is clearly a decision to make. By carefully creating three approximately equal parts, he has pitted the goddesses against each other, and is the only one of the three composers who avoids being seduced by the extra lines Congreve provides into needlessly expanding the role of Pallas. This is characteristic of the whole score. On no occasion does Eccles allow the music to intrude, eschewing extra symphonies, keeping short those that he included, and culling the introductory material to a minimum. There are no poor dramatic moments which have to be compensated for, and Eccles

has lost no opportunity to create dramatic effects, even introducing four trumpets in the short symphony and the air for Pallas, 'Hark, the glorious voice of war'. Overall, the score has a workmanlike quality, showing considerable experience of the theatre - Daniel Purcell was similarly experienced, and it is a mystery that he was unable to put that experience to good use.

Weldon's lack of stage experience is probably responsible for some of the more unusual aspects of the score, but he was not the 'complete novice' claimed by Lincoln.<sup>73</sup> He had, after all, been involved in the writing and production of *The Mask of Orpheus and Euridice* at the Besselsleigh School in 1697, and probably saw the competition as a means of leaving the then backwater job of organist of New College, Oxford.<sup>80</sup> Weldon's dramatic instinct is obvious; even the overture is integrated into the action, for the scene is headed:

A Pastoral Symphony by Paris & other Shepherds on Ida's Top, while Mercury descends.<sup>81</sup>

and is a multi-sectioned piece. A 6/8 opening (mis-labelled 6/4 in the score) with flutes and oboes sets the pastoral scene. This is followed by an ABCB' sonata with trumpet; in the C section, oboes and drum are added, and a bassoon is specified in the continuo part, suggesting that it may be during this section that Mercury's machine finally comes to rest. In contrast to Purcell's dilatory pace, Weldon's opening sequence leaves the listener flurried. In particular, the three goddesses must have appeared very rapidly indeed, Weldon allowing only sixteen bars for their descent to take

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place, although the later instruction '*Pallas descends*' and the provision of an appropriate symphony, suggests that the clouds, or whatever machines they chose to descend upon, may have only just appeared at this point. Further, ample time is available for a similar descent in the music surrounding the entries of both Venus and Juno. Like Eccles, Weldon has balanced the music of the three goddesses here, although in the later competition sequence, he does not quite avoid the temptation offered by Pallas's trumpet and drum, producing a glorious sequence of two airs, a symphony, a chorus of attendants with Pallas on a solo line, ending triumphantly in a full chorus, 'O how glorious 'tis to see'; it is almost an anticlimax to find Pallas's case offered in the following low key air. Weldon uses a three bar ground on which to construct Venus's air 'Stay lovely youth', a technique whose lulling motion assists in presenting the goddess's seductive powers.

Most prominent throughout Weldon's setting is the unusual antiphonal effects in the symphony which covers the arrival of the goddesses, a probable legacy from his experience for writing music for a collegiate chapel; these are found elsewhere on a smaller scale, but form the major structural device in the grand chorus 'Hither all ye graces'. But it is not only the antiphonal effects which suggest Weldon's background. The staggered chorus entries leading to full chorus, the extensive imitative duets and the declamatory chorus 'One only Joy Mankind can know' are all redolent of techniques found in his anthems, works such as 'Hear my crying' and 'In thee, O Lord'.

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Fortunately, Congreve's account of the first performance survives in a letter to Thomas Keally:

Indeed, I don't think any one place in the world can show such an assembly. The number of performers, besides the verse-singers, was 85. The front of the stage was all built into a concave with deal boards; all which was faced with tin, to increase and throw forwards the sound. It was all hung with sconces of wax-candles, besides the common branches of lights usual in the playhouses. The boxes and pit were all thrown into one; so that all sat in common: and the whole was crammed with beauties and beaux, not one scrub being admitted. The place where formerly the music used to play, between the pit and the stage, was turned into White's chocolate-house; the whole family being transplanted thither with chocolate, cool'd drinks, ratafia, portico, &c which every body that would called for, the whole expence of every thing being defrayed by the subscribers. I think truly the whole thing better worth coming to see than the jubilee.<sup>82</sup>

Congreve's account raises some interesting questions of performance practice. Who were the 85 performers, besides the 'verse-singers'? The orchestration of the three scores is almost the same, but does vary in significant details. All three require two recorders, timpani, first and second violins, violas and a continuo group, for which John Weldon specifies bassoons; these were probably used in the other settings. Both Purcell and Weldon ask for first and second oboes, and all three require trumpets - Purcell two, Eccles four and Weldon one. Lastly, Eccles asks for a transverse flute to characterize Venus, Purcell and Weldon making do with recorders for this purpose. The trumpet and timpani in all three scores are used to accompany the warlike Pallas in the conventional manner that is still to be found in Boyce's 1740 *Secular Masque* score, where the horns, trumpets and flutes are associated with Diana, Mars and Venus respectively. Richard Platt refers to the 'lavish scoring' used on this occasion,<sup>83</sup> but accounts show that apart from the

flutes and extra trumpets, this was the standard opera orchestra.<sup>24</sup> The total number of orchestral players would usually have been about twenty; even allowing for a considerable enlargement to say forty for such a special occasion, this still leaves a chorus of some forty-five singers. The whole was clearly on a much larger scale than would be contemplated today by a company planning to produce an 'authentic' staging of the work.

So much for the music. Whether Purcell and Eccles felt that the influence of their patrons entitled them to better treatment, or whether they were genuinely convinced of the merits of their own works, it is impossible to tell; in either case however, the sight of the unknown John Weldon carrying off the prize of 100 guineas in such a public manner must have been galling. Their pique is obvious from the dedication each wrote to their published scores. To

Anthony Henly Esq, Daniel Purcell commented:

This Sr ought to arme(?) me from Thrusting my Self on a Second Tryal before a Judge so knowing, that he can want to true Information of the Cause, and so Candid and impartial, that he will not let his favour byass his Judgment, but from you Sr, being sure of an animadversion on my real, not imaginary Errors, I hope so farr to improve by it, as to be able hereafter to present the World with something more worthy of your Patronage...<sup>25</sup>

Eccles wrote to Lord Halifax:

As to the following Composition, my Labour in it was more then requited, by your Lo<sup>ps</sup> Allowance of it at the Practice; if at the publick performance, besides the kind Approbation which it received from the Greater part of the Audience, it had also had the fortune to have pleas'd them who came prepar'd to Dislike it, I might have been too vain of my Success, and maybe not have thought my selfe Obliged (as now I think I am) by my future care to Endeavour to Obtain their good Opinions Whome it is my Ambition to please and from whome I am sorry not to have

already Deserv'd more Encouragement.<sup>25</sup>

The sentiments expressed by Eccles and Purcell accord with the slightly more vigorous views of Gottfried Finger as recorded by Roger North:

... one a forreiner, reputed a very good composer, having lost his cause, declared he was mistaken in his musick, for he thought he was to be judged by men, and not by boys...<sup>27</sup>

There is no foundation for Lincoln's assertions that 'it was taken for granted that Eccles would win', 'Finger had a high opinion of himself and fully expected to win' and that 'Purcell had everything to gain and a lot to lose';<sup>28</sup> nor does there seem to be contemporary evidence to support Tilmouth's statement that 'professional musicians...felt that Finger should have been placed first'.<sup>29</sup> This is not the last we hear of *The Judgment of Paris*, for the ill feeling rumbled on. George Stepney, the envoy to Vienna, wrote to Lord Halifax in the December of 1701:

I thank you for your Eccles his Musick, w<sup>ch</sup> I suppose is got by this time to Hamburgh and will shortly be here, where Finger will see it performed to y<sup>e</sup> best advantage: He assures me notwithstanding the partiality w<sup>ch</sup> was shown by y<sup>e</sup> Duke of Somersett and others in favor of Welding & Eccles, M<sup>r</sup>. Purcell's Musick was the best, (I mean after his own, for no Decision can destroy the Love we have for our selves).<sup>30</sup>

This letter has been thought to refer to Finger's setting, and that this 'sending of the score' was responsible for its loss.<sup>31</sup>

Clearly, this letter does not provide such information, and a beguiling image is offered by the idea that Finger, in a moment of outraged disappointment, physically destroyed the score, throwing some of it into the fire and jumping on the remaining leaves.

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Despite Lincoln's assumption that only four scores were submitted, there is evidence that a score was written by J. W. Franck.<sup>32</sup> His work is known only from an advertisement which appeared in *The London Gazette* on 2 February 1702, where it is described as being 'Compos'd for three Quires, and in quite a different way from the others, not used here before'.<sup>33</sup> The performance took place at York Buildings.

There were a few isolated performances of the settings by Eccles and Weldon after the competition performances. Weldon's must have been performed some time in 1702, at the expense of the Duke of Bedford, for the following account is preserved in the Bedford Estates Office:

For Performing in Mr Weldon's Prize Musick/in Lincolns  
Inn Fields For his Grace/The Duke of Bedford.

	P	S	d
Mr <sup>es</sup> Campion	- 3	- 4	- 6
Mr <sup>es</sup> Lindsey	- 3	- 4	- 6
The Boy	- 1	- 1	- 6
Mr Hughes	- 2	- 3	- 0
Mr Bourdon	- 2	- 3	- 0
<hr/>			
	11	-16	- 6
To my self	21	-10	- 0
<hr/>			
	33	- 6	- 6

[Signed and receipted] May y<sup>e</sup> 22<sup>nd</sup>. (1702)<sup>34</sup>

It was also performed on 18 January 1704 at Drury Lane, padded out with Italian songs, extracts from Henry Purcell, and a dialogue from *The Island Princess*; a subsequent performance took place at Lincoln's Inn Fields on 1 February. It is also possible that it was

Weldon's setting that was performed for Mrs Barry's benefit at Lincoln's Inn Fields on 10 March 1705. Eccles's version appeared in the following benefit season at the Queen's Theatre, for Mrs Bracegirdle on 11 March, and for Mrs Hodgson, and Mrs Bignall on 15 March; the mainpieces were *The Provok'd Wife* and *The Fatal Marriage* respectively.

While the masque's influence on the operatic stage was minimal, there were several interesting later references and burlesques. John Weaver chose the text to describe the action of his ballet of the same name,<sup>95</sup> and 'Hither turn thee gentle swain' is a possible model for John Gay's parody number 'Hither dear Husband turn your Eyes', which is the text of Air 52 in *The Beggar's Opera*, III xi.<sup>96</sup> Finally, with the rise of the burletta in the later eighteenth century, the work spawned the burlesques *The Golden Pippin* by Kane O'Hara and Francois Barthelemon's *The Judgment of Paris*; both will be considered in Chapter II iii.

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Later Classical Masques

After *The Judgment of Paris*, the classical masque had an intermittent life; many were new settings of old texts and most were performed around 1740. The link between these masques is that each offers a choice to the central character, with the plot usually arranged around this in a triangular structure. As can be seen from Table II ii 10, this period saw two new settings of Congreve's *The Judgment of Paris*, one of Dryden's *Secular Masque*, two of Landsdowne's *Peleus and Thetis*, and two new works, *The Judgment of Hercules* and *Circe*.

The first texts have already been discussed in detail, and need only be considered briefly here. *The Judgment of Paris* has already been considered at length; Paris confronted by power, glory and beauty, and seduced by Venus's singing, chooses beauty. In Dryden's *Secular Masque*, no choice is made by Momus, since each God proves to have been an unreliable steward of the seventeenth century. Although in *Peleus and Thetis* there are not quite the same ideals of choice and judgment represented, virtue triumphs in a similar way. Jove, confronted by the tortured Prometheus and by the deep and unquenchable love of Peleus and Thetis, sings:

Conscious of all ills that I have done  
My Fears to Prudence shall advise  
And Guilt, that made me great, shall make me wise.<sup>27</sup>

Prometheus is borne up to heaven by Jove, and the masque ends with a triumphal duet.

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Bishop Hoadley's new masque, *The Judgment of Hercules*, opens with the God in a wild uninhabited wood. Virtue and Pleasure enter with their different trains. Fiske's claim that Virtue wins easily because she has three airs to Pleasure's one is wide of the mark.<sup>98</sup> Pleasure attempts to seduce Hercules with one air, Virtue stakes her claim with another, and the three sing the trio 'Hither turn thee, lovely youth'. Pleasure again tries to persuade him this time with 'Let no joy untasted go', but after an impassioned speech from Virtue, Hercules is fired by glory, fame and sacred truth, and bursts into an 'Air (without Symphony)'. Pleasure has one more air - one of fury - and departs, leaving Hercules and Virtue to sing the final chorus.

The theme of this story was later used in Handel's *The Choice of Hercules*, first performed in March 1751. It was called by the eighteenth century not by the term 'oratorio', but more accurately, although less precisely, a 'Musical Interlude'.<sup>99</sup> The difference is also reflected in Dean's dismissive treatment of the work:

...the piece may owe its existence to Handel's economical desire to make use of his incidental music for the abandoned *Alceste*...the mechanics of this are its most interesting feature...and it makes a pleasant diversion from more serious matter'.<sup>100</sup>

The source for the subject, which was in vogue in the 1740s, is Socrates's summary of the Greek poem *Horai* by Prodius of Ceos; this is included in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*. Fiske suggests that the Hoadly libretto was the first of the series, it, two poems (1740 and 1743), and John Stanley's cantata (after 1743) preceding

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Handel's work.<sup>101</sup> However, he omits Joseph Spence's *Polymetis...* of 1747, the source for Handel's piece.<sup>102</sup>

This particular judgment - the choice between Pleasure and Virtue - is also the subject of Hayes's masque of *Circe*. The surviving songs, listed in Table II ii 11, show clearly the intention of the work, and make nonsense of Fiske's comment that they make no 'reference to the Circe legend, and it follows that, as in Arne's *Alfred*, the singers were not concerned with the plot'.<sup>103</sup> The plot as revealed by the songs is one that could well be entitled *The Triumph of Pleasure and Virtue*, *The Judgment of the Shepherd* or *The Shepherd's Choice*. The shepherd, who sings a hymn to Diana, is clearly faced by Pleasure and Virtue, who initially compete with each other in a manner similar to that found in *The Judgment of Paris*; Virtue then condemns Pleasure. However, there is a clear attempt by Circe to seduce the shepherd, and Pleasure reveals that she, Pleasure, is dogged by a deadly 'Foe, my Footsteps haunt where'er I go', and who mimicks her in dress. This is Circe, and mortals, being deceived, run into the snare by bartering real pleasure for an 'empty show'. Pleasure clearly convinces both the Shepherd and Virtue of her true worth, Circe is dispatched from the scene, and the masque closes with a big two versed air, with a chorus for their respective attendants. As one of classical Circe's main attributes is to have power over men, the protection of the shepherd by Virtue and Pleasure can clearly be placed in context of the original legend. It is quite possible that the songs, which are the contents of the volume published by Hayes in 1742, are

complete, and that only the spoken dialogue or recitative is missing.

Both Hayes's and Boyce's settings of *Peleus and Thetis*, Boyce's *Secular Masque*, and the settings of the *Judgment of Paris* survive more or less in their entirety. Of Hayes's *Circe*, we have only a few printed songs, and although its libretto was published, the score of Greene's *The Judgment of Hercules* was lost after its inclusion in the Greatorrex Sale in 1832.<sup>104</sup>

Despite the comparative wealth of source material, the context of this group of masques remains shadowy. There are no definite dates of first performances of any of them, given that the performance of either Sammartini's or Arne's settings of Congreve's text at Cliveden in 1740 is improbable.<sup>105</sup> The texts are all old ones, excepting the Hoadly libretto which was certainly based on old material; we know nothing about the *Circe* libretto. The few later recorded performances are almost always of an occasional nature, the festival of Boyce's music in Cambridge to celebrate the award of his Doctorate of Music, accounting for two of them.<sup>106</sup> As far as the remaining masques are concerned, the negatives only multiply. There is nothing to support Fiske's dating of Boyce's *Peleus and Thetis* to 1736.<sup>107</sup>

However, some of the material relating to the history of Boyce's *Secular Masque* is suggestive. The date of the composition is generally considered as being before 1747, on the evidence of the

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songs from it which appeared in *Lyra Britannica* published that year - 'With horns and with hounds', 'Thy sword within thy scabbard keep' and 'Calms appear when storms are past'.<sup>108</sup> It seems certain however, that the setting was composed at least by the beginning of 1746 for, in March of that year, Diana's song 'With horns and with hounds' was included in the music for the Covent Garden production of *The Merchant of Venice*; the eighteenth-century performances of this masque are listed in Table II ii 12.<sup>109</sup> Three nights later the song was again sung by Beard, this time on the same night as *Much Ado About Nothing*; it is not clear in the latter case, whether the song was sung as part of Beard's role in Shakespeare's play or whether it was performed between the acts.<sup>110</sup>

According to Burney, John Beard was instrumental in bringing the masque to the London stage:

Not long after the first performance of this drama [*The Chaplet*] his friend Mr Beard brought on the same stage the secular ode, written by Dryden, and originally set by Dr Boyce for Hickford's room or the Castle concert... This piece, though less successful than *The Chaplet*, by the animated performance and friendly zeal of Mr Beard, was many times exhibited before it was wholly laid aside.<sup>111</sup>

It was certainly included in the series of performances of Boyce's music which took place in Cambridge in 1749; numbered among the other works performed on this occasion, was another masque, *Peleus and Thetis*, which was a setting of the George Granville libretto of 1701, and the serenata *Solomon*.<sup>112</sup>

The only surviving full score of the *Secular Masque* is that in the Royal College of Music. The setting is for two altos (Diana,

Venus), 2 tenors (Chronos, Momus) and 2 basses (Janus, Mars), with a chorus of altos, tenors and basses and orchestra.<sup>113</sup> The performing history of Boyce's setting of the masque suggests that this score was prepared for a specific occasion, although it is impossible to determine whether it represents the work's original form or a later arrangement.

The 1746 performances of 'With horns and with hounds' were by the tenor John Beard, and it is probable that there was a tenor setting of the aria which has not survived, for the compass of the alto setting in the score is a to c'', with much of the music lying between f' and c'', an unlikely range for a tenor aria written in the tenor clef. On other occasions, the tenor John Beard sang the part of Momus, whose satirical mocking character one feels would have appealed to him.<sup>114</sup>

The setting of 'With horns and with hounds' that appeared later in 1746 in *Lyra Britannica* was for soprano with a range of f' to c#'''. Boyce also included in the volume a soprano setting of 'Calms appear when storms are past'; these are presumably the settings sung by the sopranos Kitty Clive and Mrs Norris at Drury Lane in 1750, as Table II ii 12 shows.<sup>115</sup> Merely substituting the soprano settings for those for alto does not result in an 'original' score however. The final phrase of the recitative 'Since Momus comes to laugh below', for example, which precedes 'With horns and with hounds', is incompatible with the former, for the key of the alto setting is F while that of the soprano setting is

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D. A draft of Boyce's substitute recitative ending in D can be found in Birmingham.<sup>116</sup> Further, the following quartet has an alto line for Diana, as does the final chorus in which both Diana and Venus sing.

While the occasion on which the score in this ATB arrangement was given is unknown, the organisation of the music, in particular the choruses, indicates the type of performance which could have been given using it. The chorus required by Dryden's libretto consists of huntsmen, nymphs, warriors and lovers. Diana is the only deity specifically provided with an entourage, but the warriors and lovers are required in the last grand dance, and it is clear that both Mars and Venus have entered with attendants as well.

The libretto shows that the first chorus 'Tis better to laugh than to cry' is labelled by Dryden as 'Cho. of all 3', indicating that it should be sung by Janus, Chronos and Momus, who are the only characters present at this point. The second chorus 'With shouting and hooting we pierce thro' the sky' calls for 'Cho. of all' but seems to be intended for Diana and her attendants only. Those choruses which follow Mars' entry - 'Plenty, peace and pleasure fly' and 'Sound the trumpet' - and that which follows Venus's appearance - 'Calms appear when storms are past' - are also intended for those deities and their followers only. The third chorus also has the indication 'Cho. of all' and follows a quartet for Janus, Chronos, Momus and Diana but, on this occasion, the sentiments of the text are appropriate for everyone on stage to

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express. The chorus 'The fools are only thinner' should be sung by the three gods sitting in judgment on Mars; again it seems pointless in the context of the drama that the deity on whom judgement is being passed should participate in his own denunciation. The final chorus is clearly sung by the entire cast who are now assembled on stage.

This dramatic grouping is not, however, realised by Boyce in his setting. The consistent scoring of each chorus necessitates that the same group of voices are present each time. Although this, in itself, does not necessarily indicate dramatic inconsistency, the first chorus, intended for Janus, Chronos and Momus provides for alto, tenor and bass voices, although no alto is present on stage and logically none should appear until the entry of Diana. 'Tis better to laugh' also demonstrates that there was an independent chorus and that the choruses were not sung by the soloists alone.

The manuscript also lacks the dances indicated by Dryden in his text. The advertisement for the performance, which took place on 30 March 1750, shows Boyce provided them, for the masque was to be performed with 'Proper dances, choruses etc.'<sup>17</sup> Their loss tends to damage the dramatic shape of the masque, for the first dance which occurs following Diana's entry and short chorus, is the first lull (and indeed the only one) which Dryden allows in a series of rapid entries roughly dividing the work in two. While the omission of the second dance is perhaps felt less by the audience, the masque, as a consequence, finishes without a dance to confirm the

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final resolution celebrating the passing of the old age and looking forward to the new.

That the masque could ever have been successfully staged in this version is scarcely credible and it is an inescapable conclusion that a production based on this score never took place. Fiske suggests that the score may have been prepared for one of the Three Choirs Festivals in the early 1740's, when it is known some dramatic works were given. As female contraltos did not then exist, he concludes that an all male cast was used.<sup>119</sup> This being the case, the possibility of a production is even more remote for, while the eighteenth-century stage tolerated many absurdities, it is unlikely that dancing male nymphs would have been among them. The static nature of the choruses suggests that an oratorio or serenata performance was intended.

It is clear from the description of what Burney supposes is the original performance at Hickford's Rooms or at the Castle Tavern Concerts, that Boyce conceived the work with this style of performance in mind; Burney says that it was presented in 'Still Life'.<sup>120</sup> The 1747 Castle concert libretto of *Acis and Galatea* which carries the descriptive title 'serenata', indicates that works were given in such a manner at this time,<sup>120</sup> while a drawing by J. P. Emslie shows that the main concert room at Hickford's would have lent itself readily to a serenata performance.<sup>121</sup>

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Reports of the first evening of the 1750 Drury Lane staging of Boyce's setting are not encouraging:

Play [Fletcher's *The Pilgrim*] not much lik'd and ye  
Masque greatly dislik'd.<sup>122</sup>

Cross reports that later they 'went off better', but there were only four performances of the masque, undoubtedly due not to Boyce's music, but to the occasional nature of the piece.<sup>123</sup>

It is in the volume 'A MISCELLANY OF LYRIC POEMS' that at least one possible reason for the composition of this group of masques is found. Its contents include the only surviving text of *The Judgment of Hercules* as well as the text *Peleus and Thetis* 'set by Mr Boyce'.<sup>124</sup> Clearly, Greene's masque was intended for, or at least was only performed at the newer Apollo Academy. In 1731, the Academy was split into two by an internal disagreement of the authorship of 'In una siepe ombrosa', which Bononcini had claimed as his own. It was subsequently shown to be by Antonio Lotti, and Maurice Greene, who had been a supporter of Bononcini's, left the group to found the rival Apollo Academy. With him also went Boyce, Festing and a number of performers.<sup>125</sup>

Unfortunately, the only copy of the rules of the society have been lost, but it seems probable that the inspiration behind most of these works was the precepts of the earlier 'Academy of Music, Held in the APOLLO'.<sup>126</sup> The history of this institution - which still awaits a thorough study - is confused, although it seems clear that its origins lie in the Academy of Vocal Music founded in 1726, in

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'an attempt to restore ancient church music'. If the new body's ideas were also to revive 'ancient' music, it would account for the inclusion of earlier masques such as those from *The Indian Queen* by the brothers Purcell, the masque in *The Tempest* and Handel's *Acis and Galatea*. It would also go some way to explain the sudden resetting by other composers of old texts, dismissed unconvincingly in Arne's case at least, as a search for a text of greater literary stature.<sup>127</sup>

Greene's masque was clearly performed at the Academy, and so was Boyce's, for both texts were included in the later book, also subtitled, 'The Greatest Part written for, AND performed in The Academy of Music'.<sup>128</sup> The texts in the volume cannot, however, account for all the vocal works performed in the Academy's concerts; further, not all the same texts are included in these two editions of the Academy's lyric poems. As far as the other composers are concerned, Arne's involvement in a body as precious as the Academy seems rather unlikely, but Sammartini on the other hand had played for Greene when that composer received his DMus degree, and was associated with Bononcini. He was also involved in a variety of concerts and theatrical activities. The rather patchy later performances of some of the masques, shown in Table II ii 13, only serve to support such a possibility, since it indicates a limited rather than popular appeal.

The remaining classical masques are listed in Table II ii 14. Once again, the element of choice is the basis for some of these pieces,

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and it comes as no surprise that of these later works, Christopher Smart's masque is the most interesting; it is difficult not to see this work as being a companion piece to his *Ode on St Cecilia's Day*, in praise of music. *The Choice of Apollo* is a work of dubious quality. There is no real choice here; *The Decision of Apollo* would be a more appropriate title. Britannia, desirous of impressing other nations, calls on Poetry, Music and Painting, and refers them to Apollo on Parnassus for guidance on how to proceed. He passes the buck to George's consort. As Fiske says:

Unfortunately, the Masque stops at this point, and we never see the Sister Arts in Windsor Castle getting useful suggestions from Charlotte.<sup>129</sup>

The work was written for Yates's benefit and received only one performance.

Both *Telemachus* and *Calypso* use the same plot as Hughes's Italian opera *Calypso and Telemachus* of 1712; both deal with the story of Telemachus who is protected from Calypso's intentions by Minerva, disguised as his confidante Mentor. The connection between the masque form and these two long three act pieces is tenuous, and they illustrate that by the 1770s, almost any works with classical figures and transformations could be labelled masques by their authors.

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II iii Interlude I: The Masque Burlesque

Those works that burlesqued the masque all belong to the later eighteenth-century genre known as the 'burletta', and pilloried the plots using classical stories. As we shall see in the following chapter, Richard Leveridge's *Pyramus and Thisbe*, although a comic masque, in fact satirises Italian opera rather than the masque, owing its descriptive title to the Italianate masques it attempted to parody.

The burletta appears on the British stage in the third quarter of the eighteenth century, when the English all-sung *Midas* made its appearance in Dublin. The first performance of an English burletta was a private one, at the house of William Brownlow MP, outside Belfast. He, O'Hara and Lord Mornington all contributed to the writing of the work. It is impossible to say with any certainty exactly what was the motivation behind its writing. Despite Fiske's claims to the contrary,<sup>1</sup> it is clear from T. J. Walsh's study of opera in Ireland, that the first Italian burletta was performed there in 1761, the year *after Midas* was written.<sup>2</sup> *Midas* cannot then be based on a work performed in Dublin. The most likely explanation is that Mornington, who was remarkable for his musical talents and who had been called to House of Lords in 1758, saw the Italian burlettas on the London stage and imitated them.<sup>3</sup> It is inconceivable that the private performance of O'Hara's burletta inspired the appearance on the Dublin stage of the Italian variety.

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It is possible however, that the productions of the Italian company were responsible for its introduction to the public. *Midas* is about a singing contest; Apollo has been thrown out of heaven after being discovered by Jupiter in an amour. His appearance on earth causes havoc among the female pastoral population, and he cuckolds Midas. The singing contest is organised by Midas in an attempt to defeat Apollo and win back his shepherdess, but when Apollo discovers its purpose, he gives Midas a pair of ass's ears.

It should perhaps be pointed out that the burlesques were among the most successful theatrical productions in the eighteenth century. *Midas* was performed both in its original three act version and in its afterpiece two-act-form on numerous occasions, and had reached even Boston by the 1790s.<sup>4</sup>

Unlike many of the descriptive theatrical titles of this period the application of the term burletta seems to have been relatively consistent. It was used originally to describe small Italian comic operas usually performed as intermezzi. Pergolesi's *La Serva Padrona* was described as a burletta at its first performance in London in 1750.<sup>5</sup> That some burlettas were burlesques of masques there is no doubt, but the burletta was not solely a skit on the masque.

Nicholas Temperley points to the conventions of opera seria as the source for much of the burlesque, and a brief examination of *The Portrait*, a burletta with music by Samuel Arnold which was first

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performed in 1770 illustrates the point.<sup>6</sup> The first piece of recitative starts with the role of the confidante:

With heroines in romances  
It was the constant trade,  
To tell their stories to some confidante;  
But when a smart gallant  
Makes amorous advances,  
A modern lady trusts her chambermaid.<sup>7</sup>

The characters are those of the Commedia dell'arte - Pantaloon, Leander, Pierrot, Isabella and Columbine - and the story is one of the young lovers being plagued by the unrequited love of the lady's elderly guardian. The burlesque turns on a double deceit, for her guardian cares nothing at all for her; he is simply illustrating that youth despises age. The portrait of the title is the guardian's own. He cuts out the head and places his own face at the hole in the canvas, so that he can overhear the young couple's conversation at dinner.

The classical masques were the basis of the most popular and important burlesques. Dibdin's *Poor Vulcan!* is a satire on Motteux's *The Loves of Mars and Venus*<sup>8</sup> and there is a version of *The Death of Dido* in which Dido hangs herself in her own garters.<sup>9</sup> The Congreve masque the *Judgment of Paris* was one of the most frequently set masque texts of the eighteenth century, for apart from those settings for the original competition in 1701, it was later set by Sammartini and Arne - it was also one of the most frequently burlesqued. O'Hara used it as the model for *The Golden Pippin*,<sup>10</sup> as did Ralph Schomberg and Francois Barthelemon,<sup>11</sup> and it

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was possibly the model for the earlier lost pantomime masque *The Contending Deities* by Peter Prelleur.<sup>12</sup>

The action of *The Golden Pippin* is essentially the same as the *Judgment of Paris*, with the additional characters of Jupiter, and of Momus, the literary god of satire. The first and most obvious point of burlesque is the title. The perfect golden fruit of the Hesperides has become a common garden apple. Not only was the pippin known as part of a cry of the Irish costermongers (a fact guaranteed to attract derision in the eighteenth century), but the word is derived from the imperfections or pips on the side of the fruit. The apple becomes even more of an absurdity when it transpires that Momus has arranged for it to be stolen from the Gardens of the Hesperides. The theft was originally one of the tasks of Hercules, and the serpent, which in classical mythology had been sent to guard the fruit, turns up in the burletta as a rather woebegone dragon. The apple is delivered by special messenger, and is responsible for the expected discord.

Far from the idyllic pastoral setting of the *Judgment of Paris*, *The Golden Pippin* opens with:

'... a Splendid Pavilion in the clouds : JUNO, PALLAS, and VENUS at a Card-Table playing at Tedrille; on one Side a Table, with Goblets, &c. IRIS, in Waiting, During a Symphony, VENUS shuffles and deals. PALLAS frets at her bad cards.'<sup>13</sup>

The tone is immediately set. Pallas is shortly to accuse Venus of cheating during the deal. An argument ensues between the three, although Venus, in the turmoil, slyly pockets her winnings.

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The characters of the three goddesses are revealed in the opening scene. Pallas is definitely a peevish trouble-maker. It is never established whether or not Venus has really cheated, but Pallas' intention appears to be to precipitate a quarrel. Juno is the reasonable bystander and mediator between Pallas and Venus, although she is ultimately forced into an uneasy alliance with Pallas when Venus is awarded the apple. Venus is entirely self-satisfied. She does not react at all to the accusations of cheating. She only becomes involved in the discussion when she can proclaim her own beauty. Jupiter is solely interested in avoiding marital problems, while Paris, the fop, to whom the matter has been referred, is vain and foolish, and probably homosexual, with no interest in the apple at all. He refers to it as 'precious bauble'. There is no real decision to be made. Paris is struck with Venus's physical beauty and awards her the apple.

The story becomes almost inverted - the apple is there merely to cause or aggravate petty discords between bored deities, Paris is quite uncaring as to the result of his decision, and it is made on the basis of physical beauty, rather than on the beauty of Venus's singing.

The important change in the nature of the work is the introduction of action, and of communication between the characters. In the Congreve text, Mercury acts as the go-between in Paris' dealings with the goddesses, Venus, Pallas and Juno, who do not react to one another's presence; they merely appeal to him independently. This

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stylised presentation associated with the masque is completely broken down, destroying the otherwise emblematic nature of the deities.

The score of *The Golden Pippin* is a pastiche, with tunes taken from various operas, with the inclusion of well-known ballads, and a few numbers which appear to have been written by O'Hara himself. O'Hara was also responsible for the recitative, now unfortunately lost. The pastiche is quite unsophisticated, there being no attempt to establish a coherent key scheme similar to those found in all-sung works of the same date. The music does not participate in the burlesque at all, apart from the initial selection of tunes which might be associated by contemporary audiences with other works, singers or contexts. This is in contrast to Lampe's setting of *Pyramus and Thisbe* of 1745, where several of the characters have enormous Handelian melismas on unimportant and impossible words. The essence of the burletta was, in fact, the same as that of ballad opera - the satire contained in the text was the most important feature, and was best communicated to the audience in simple airs.

As Table II iii 1 shows, the music used ranged from Irish folk tunes to airs from Italian operas. The settings prove to be as simple as the tune for there is only a small amount of text repetition and little ornamentation. The ensembles, which are ensembles of action rather than contemplation, consist of a verse followed by a chorus, in the manner of a glee.

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*The Golden Pippin* not only relates to the Congreve text in its use of myth. One of the most popular tunes from Arne's setting was Juno's air 'Let ambition fire thy mind; Thou wert born o'er Men to reign'; its text is distorted into 'Yield, or beware lest rage, disdain or resentment fire my mind'. Other similar burlesques point to the 1701 libretto as the target of the satire.

Only those masques that offered a moral choice were burlesqued; those which belonged to the later occasional tradition which complimented the monarch escaped. The moral choice expressed the need for order, which had been an important concept during the political instability of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This mattered less to the population in the latter part of the eighteenth, who could afford to satirise it, certain in the belief that the odd rebellion could easily be quelled, and that the House of Hanover was secure upon the throne. It also has to be admitted that the spectacle of Gods and Goddesses with obscure allegorical significance must by this stage have seemed uninteresting, and even a trifle absurd, which made them an obvious target for ridicule.

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## II iv The Italianate Masque

Thus unless we use the timely Prevention, the *British Muse* is like to meet with the same Fate that *Tithonus* is said to have done of old...eaten and consumed by the Jaws of Time, till nothing remained of him but an empty Voice.

John Dennis  
*Essay on Italian Opera* 1706

## Italian Opera in London 1705-1715

The sporadic attempts to establish English as an operatic language have already been outlined by several authors.<sup>1</sup> It is my purpose here to show that the three attempts - William Congreve and John Eccles's *Semele*, John Hughes's and J. E. Galliard's *Calypso and Telemachus*, and the group of all sung masques masterminded by Colley Cibber, written by several authors and set by Johann Pepusch - each have different models, and that although they all have ostensibly the same end, namely all-sung opera in English, the motivation behind each one of them was different.

The gradual establishment of Italian opera on the London stage started with the performance by Rich's company at Drury Lane on 16 January 1705 of *Arsinoe, Queen of Cyprus* arranged by Thomas Clayton.<sup>2</sup> A piece damned by all critics who heard it, and by those who have studied it since, it had a certain, although by no means overwhelming, popularity.<sup>3</sup> It was sung in English, but consisted of Italianate arias, some of which appear to be genuine, and others which were possibly written by Clayton.<sup>4</sup> Following closely on the

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heels of Rich, Congreve and Vanbrugh opened the new Queen's Theatre in the Haymarket with the first all-sung opera in Italian, Jakob Greber's *The Loves of Ergasto*.<sup>5</sup>

The performances of these two operas at rival theatres can be seen in Table II iv 1. Drury Lane then persisted briefly with opera in English, staging *Camilla* in 1706. It was revived 1708 and 1710, when it was performed as a bilingual opera in Italian and English; its revival in 1719 in English will be commented upon later. The Queen's Theatre then staged its own Italian opera in English, the Motteux translation of *The Temple of Love*, with another pastiche score, which included arias by Saggione.<sup>6</sup>

Opposition to Italian opera had, by this time, begun to appear in print. One of the first forays was that from which the quotation that heads this chapter is taken, John Dennis's *Essay on Italian Opera* of 1706. While it is not necessary to rehearse all his arguments here, the central core of his discussion is that a work that is 'entirely musical' is objectionable, because the sounds are 'low and effeminate' and create a situation in which the content (the intellectual side) becomes irrelevant, and the sound (the sensual side) dominates.<sup>7</sup> English, in any case, has too many consonants to be set satisfactorily; further a balance should be maintained between singing and speaking, in the manner of the ancients. The intellectual side should be fostered by the government, because the wisdom which is gained from it is the basis for the well being of nations. Wisdom can, therefore, only be

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gained from poets, not from composers. In Dennis's terms, drama = Shakespeare and liberty = Elizabeth I, both belonging to the post reformation era. His fear, expressed in artistic hyperbole, is that an all-sung opera will be too rich a taste for the public's palate, and will destroy the more subtle flavours represented by English opera, which is a mixture of sensuousness and reason; those who have tasted of love are blind to the subtleties of friendship. Some of these themes were to be continued in his later *Essay upon Public Spirit* published in 1711.<sup>8</sup>

This was all very well, but it did not contribute in any practical way to the repertoire. Joseph Addison, who was later to contribute to opera criticism through the pages of *The Spectator*, also wrote the libretto for *Rosamond*, the next work to be performed at Drury Lane.<sup>9</sup> Addison was to expatiate on the shortcomings of the Italian works, and to put forward his ideas on what an English opera should be like. One aspect, considered in No 18, is that England needed more natural and reasonable entertainments rather than these elaborate Italian trifles - here he echoes Dennis.<sup>10</sup> Another was that there is no point in singing Italian opera in translation as this merely distorts the original text.<sup>11</sup> A third, encapsulated in a remark found in No 29, is that recitative must be adapted carefully to suit the English language.<sup>12</sup> However, above all, his complaint is that there is no realism; it is this that inspired one of his most famous *Spectator* passages, that on the use of sparrows in Handel's *Rinaldo*. It also provoked the following passage taken from No 28:



I will not say that a Monkey is a better Man than some of the Opera Heroes; but certainly he is a better Representative of a Man, than the most artificial Composition of Wood and Wire.<sup>13</sup>

*Rosamond*, however, cannot be said to have advanced the cause.

Addison, in his desire to reform the sprawling and complicated plots of Italian operas, allows almost no incident, and his choice of Thomas Clayton to set the text resulted in a score that Fiske has described as 'cretinous'; the opera only had three performances.<sup>14</sup>

That Italian opera was performed in English at all led Colley Cibber to pen one of the more scathing passages in his *Apology*:

Not long before this time, [1706] the *Italian* Opera began first to steal into *England*; but in as rude a Disguise, and unlike it self, as possible; in a lame, hobbling Translation, into our own Language, with false Quantities, or metre out of Measure, to its original Notes, sung by our own unskilful Voices, with Graces misapply'd to almost every Sentiment, and with Action, lifeless and unmeaning, through every Character.<sup>15</sup>

It is unfortunate that his view of bilingual opera is not recorded. This bastard form finally ended with the performance of *Almahide* in 1710, for Heidegger, having tired of the critics, rounded on them in a way that, as Dean and Knapp point out, they may not have expected:<sup>16</sup>

Several People of Quality, and Encouragers of the Opera's, having found fault with the Absurdity of those Scenes, where the Answers are made in *English*, to those that sing in *Italian*, and in *Italian* to those that recite in *English*, and it being impossible to have the whole Opera perform'd in *English*, because the chief Actors would not be able to perform their parts in our language: I hope I shall be pardoned, if I have made all Parts in *Italian*.<sup>17</sup>

This must have satisfied those such as the anonymous author of *A Critical Discourse on Opera* of 1709, who listed a single language among his requirements for a good opera,<sup>18</sup> but it led Addison to make the tart observation:

At length the Audience grew tired of understanding Half the Opera, and therefore to ease themselves intirely of the Fatigue of Thinking, have so ordered it at present that the whole Opera is performed in an unknown tongue.<sup>19</sup>

As Tables II iv 1 and II iv 5 illustrate, all opera was thereafter performed entirely in Italian or in English.

The interpretation of Table II iv 1 requires some background on the history of the management of the theatres during this period.<sup>20</sup> The first few years were almost straight competition. Financially this proved impractical, and during September 1706, a move by the Lord Chamberlain resulted in only operas and musical entertainments being performed at Drury Lane, and only plays at the Queen's Theatre in the Haymarket.<sup>21</sup> On 31 December 1707, the theatres were again reorganised by the Lord Chamberlain, this time moving all the musicians, singers and dancers to the Queen's Theatre and the actors to Drury Lane.<sup>22</sup> This situation was again tinkered with on 6 June 1709, after which plays with music and musical interludes could be performed at Drury Lane, and Swiney at the Queen's could perform plays as well as operas.<sup>23</sup> One is tempted to ask the question posed by one of the characters in *The Wonder in the Sun*, 'What are these Ideots [sic] doing?'. The Queen's Theatre - later the King's - then continued to be the centre for opera throughout the period under discussion.

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The only serious attempt to produce an entirely English opera fell foul of these changes of management. Eccles's setting of Congreve's text appears to have been completed by 1707. Stoddard<sup>24</sup> Lincoln suggests that the work was intended for the opening of the new theatre in the Haymarket in 1705, but that it was not completed in time.<sup>24</sup> However, when Congreve left the theatre at the end of 1706, Eccles no longer had the same influence in the administrative hierarchy to achieve production.<sup>25</sup> In any case, at that point in the management reshuffles, there were not enough good singers at the Haymarket to perform it, and Mrs Bracegirdle, for whom the part of *Semele* may have been intended, had retired.<sup>26</sup> There is much circumstantial evidence to support the above; whatever the truth of the matter, *Semele* did not reach the stage. We find in the libretto yet another preface, where this time recitative is defended:

*For what they call Recitative in Musick, is only a more tuneable Speaking, it is a kind of Prose in Musick; its Beauty consists in coming near Nature, and in improving the natural Accents of Words by more Pathetick or Emphatical Tones.*<sup>27</sup>

The opera is quite unlike an Italian one in construction. It has ten named characters, and a large cast of extras and a chorus. Although the author makes his apologies for the alterations in the story, he is clearly quite untroubled, for under '*the Title of an Opera ... greater Absurdities are every day excus'd.*' Three of the arias use the *da capo* form, but the remainder are through composed, the musical style being a blend of Italian and Purcellian elements.<sup>28</sup>

The claims made for *Semele* are high. Price, for example, refers to it as 'the only English opera of worth to survive from the critical decade', a claim which means little, since there can hardly be said to be any competition.<sup>29</sup> Lincoln comments:

'Semele' is not only a document of rare interest when looked at in this light, [a blend of English and Italian styles], but a fine work in its own right...It might easily have led to a native English opera'.<sup>30</sup>

There is, in fact, no evidence to suggest that, had *Semele* been performed, the theatres would have abandoned Italian opera and, indeed, the performance figures in Tables II iv 1 and vi 5 suggest the contrary. Whatever qualities *Semele* may appear to us to have, the public then would probably have found Eccles's music old fashioned.

The next work in English, *Calypso and Telemachus* of 1712, was 'after the Italian manner', although in some senses it was still an English opera. Like *Semele*, it was the only one of its kind, the only attempt to write a full-length opera in English on the Italian model. It was the result of a collaborative attempt by John Hughes (1677-1720) and John Ernest Galliard (c1687-1749). It was generally agreed that Hughes's:

...skill in music which was exquisite, gave him such an advantage over other poets, as might, with proper management, have carried the English opera as high as the Italian.<sup>31</sup>

He also wrote libretti for J. C. Pepusch, Phillip Hart and Daniel Purcell. Hughes and Galliard's attempt to establish English as a sung language dated in practical terms from the composition of *Six English Cantatas* published in 1710; their first and only full scale

operatic attempt came with *Calypso and Telemachus*. The former's views on opera are detailed in a letter he wrote to *The Spectator* in 1712, and in the introduction to the 1717 edition of *Calypso and Telemachus*.<sup>32</sup> The letter to *The Spectator* remained unpublished, until it was included in the poet's collected works; the 1717 preface is a more considered expression of the same ideas.<sup>33</sup>

Neither the letter nor the 1717 preface derides the public taste for Italian music and opera; in fact, it compliments the English audience by suggesting that their enthusiasm for things Italian is to due to

... the ingenious Temper of the British Nation, that they are willing to be instructed in so elegant an Art by the best examples.<sup>34</sup>

While Hughes admits that English is not so soft and full of vowels as Italian, he points out that dramatic music requires a range of expressions, and it is unnecessary to set everything with the 'same loose and vowellly softness'.<sup>35</sup> Again, the most important thing for Hughes, however, is that the language used should be the language of the audience, and while it may enjoy airs in a foreign language for the tune,

... it is impossible that the Recitative shou'd give Pleasure, which can raise no such Ideas; this being not so properly singing as speaking in Musical Cadences ... Recitative Musick takes its rise from the natural Tones and Changes of the Voice in speaking, and is indeed no more than a set of modulated Pronunciation.<sup>36</sup>

The *Spectator* letter also argues the above, but claims that the reason people dislike 'recitative music', is that the beauties of both the music and the text are concealed by the lack of

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understanding of the Italian. It also includes a passage which foreshadows many twentieth-century discussions of opera as drama:

There are some persons who have acquired a certain cant, that the music is the only thing to be regarded as an opera, not considering that there is an inseparable connection between the beauties in the music and those of the poetry.<sup>37</sup>

Hughes argues that this is at the heart of opera, and that, as the immediacy of such a reception by the audience is necessary for the full appreciation of the work, it must be in the same language as that spoken by the audience.

As Table II iv 2 shows, *Calypso and Telemachus* has the usual five characters of Italian opera, although one of them is a dual role. One of the great weaknesses of the plot - little more happens than can be gleaned from the table above - is that the opera does not end after the two most interesting characters have left the stage. Spurned, Calypso's attempt at revenge by encouraging Proteus to kill Telemachus and thereby gaining the heart of Eucharis, fails. Mentor reveals to Telemachus that he is really Minerva, and that his father Ulysses is still alive elsewhere, and they escape in a cloud, leaving loose ends of the plot to be tidied, and Calypso in mourning.

The music, which was published by Walsh after the performances in 1712, shows that it consists of thirty-one pieces, of which only six are not in *da capo* form.<sup>38</sup> These, and the overall plan of *Calypso and Telemachus* illustrated in Table II iv 3, with its pattern of exit arias, are among the features that set this opera

apart from *Semele*. Some *da capo* arias are omitted in the table; others which appear not to be exit arias fulfil the function of one by being given as asides. For the audience, the Englishness of the opera lies in its language, its choice of a mythological plot, and its series of transformations, while its Italian characteristics include the *da capo* aria, its exit plan and the balanced use of six characters. It received its premiere at the King's Theatre on 17 May 1712; this and later performances are detailed in Table II iv 4.

*Calypso and Telemachus* cannot be considered a success, although, if the publisher's notes to Hughes' correspondence are to be believed, the reasons appear to have had little to do with the work:

[The Italian Company] had intent enough...to procure an order, the day before the performing of this opera, to take off the subscription for it, and to open the house at the lowest prices, or not at all.<sup>39</sup>

There were also hints that the then Lord Chamberlain, the Duke of Shrewsbury, was partisan because of his Italian wife.<sup>40</sup>

However, David Mercator wrote to Hughes on 21 May 1712:

...I am satisfied that your opera is so well received by all the best of both sexes, that you neither will nor can lose anything by a want of your presence...<sup>41</sup>

So things were clearly not as bad as they seem. Mercator had nothing but praise to offer on the work:

The method of the story, the easy neatness of the style, the aptness and vivacity of the songs, the consciousness of well-chosen words, (to give more liberty to the musician to display his artful harmony, without tiring the audience,) and yet dearness of good sense, you must give me leave to own, I think, wonderfully fine and

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taking.<sup>42</sup>

These few performances of *Calypso and Telemachus* made little difference to the flow of Italian operas being produced at the Queen's Theatre - later, the King's - although the actual number of performances of each work was lower than the earlier pieces.

The *London Stage* is clearly wrong in its assertion that there were no new operas performed in the 1715-1716 season, for *Cleartes*, a Nicolini adaptation of Scarlatti's *L'amor volubile e tiranno* was first staged in 18 April.<sup>43</sup> However, despite the presentation of two new operas the next season - *Venceslao* and *Tito Manilo* - there were performances of old Italian operas, such as *Cleartes* (15 December 1716), and *Rinaldo* (5 January 1717), and there were no works in 1718-1719; the decline was complete. The 1719-1720 season however, saw the establishment of the Royal Academy of Music, for its letters patent are dated 9 May 1719; it was to receive an annual Royal subsidy of £,1000.<sup>44</sup>

The decline of Italian opera before the establishment of the Royal Academy then, had little or nothing to do with these somewhat feeble attempts to promote all-sung English opera. In fact, the taste of the audience was for performances of spoken drama. Concentrating the operas alone, as do many discussions of this period, misrepresents the playhouse repertoire, for although the Italian opera was successful, it accounts for only a small proportion of performances at the London theatres. Between 1706 and 1718, there was an average of around 340 performances per season in

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the London theatres, giving a total of 4760 possible performances. The number of performances of opera was 576, less than an eighth of the total possible performances. Spoken drama still held the public's attention - Colley Cibber's own dramas were very popular, there were revivals of assorted Shakespeare plays including *Macbeth*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Timon of Athens* and *Hamlet*, and there were the great theatrical successes which dominated the stage such as Joseph Addison's *Cato* and Nicholas Rowe's *Jane Shore*, first performed at Drury Lane on 14 April 1713 and 2 February 1714 respectively.<sup>45</sup>

Opera in England before 1715 then, had gone through several phases. It had been sung in English with a pastiche score using Italian tunes. It had been sung in a bilingual form using both English and Italian, also with a pastiche score. These were followed by the English opera *Semele* completed by 1707. It had a score entirely by John Eccles, music with a vague Purcellian feel, and the majority of its airs were through composed - but it never reached the stage. The performance of *Almahide* in 1710 was sung entirely in Italian, and marked the end of attempts at bilingual opera. This challenge was taken up by John Hughes with an opera in English 'after the Italian manner', a work that relied on Italianate conventions for its musical organisation, but whose plot retained the mythological elements of dramattick opera and masque. *Calypso and Telemachus* was not a box office success, and the theatre subsequently performed only works sung in Italian. Such was the state of play when Colley Cibber and Johann Pepusch collaborated at Drury Lane in 1715.

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Operatic Experiments 1715-1719

The failure of Hughes's and Galliard's efforts to establish all-sung English opera left the field open for Colley Cibber, who, looking for a new attraction at Drury Lane, was responsible for the next attempt. As in 1701, the masque form was chosen to be the vehicle for the experiments, but the goals were clearly different from those of the circle that chose Congreve; their aim with the *Judgment of Paris* was to encourage 'Musick' in whatever form, while Colley Cibber was more concerned with forwarding the cause of English as an operatic language.

Cibber chose Pepusch as his collaborator, and after the first two works, also used texts by Hughes and Barton Booth; the group of masques which resulted from Cibber's activities have been considered variously by Winton Dean,<sup>46</sup> D. F. Cook,<sup>47</sup> and Roger Fiske.<sup>48</sup> In reassessing these pieces and the later works that they inspired, it is necessary to dispute the basic presumption of recent scholarship that they all simply belong to the same thread of development. Further, the discussion in Dean, Cook and Fiske is confined primarily to six masques - the four pieces (*Venus and Adonis*, *Myrtillo*, *Apollo and Daphne* and *The Death of Dido*) set by Pepusch, J. E. Galliard's *Pan and Syrinx* and Handel's *Acis and Galatea*, this last piece taken, in any case, from a different environment. While in one sense such a grouping is logical - they have similar pastoral themes, are all-sung 'in the Italian manner'

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and so on - it will be demonstrated that it obscures the pattern of performances and revivals, and the relationship between the two theatres. This discussion will consider firstly the four masques by Pepusch, then those works staged in reply by John Rich at the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields, the works performed at this theatre which can be associated with John Ernest Galliard, and finally, Handel's masque of *Acis and Galatea*, privately performed at Cannons in the summer of 1718.

The first group of masques, listed in Table II iv 6, were those performed at Drury Lane. The first to appear was *Venus and Adonis*; it uses the story of Adonis, the mortal who thinks only of the chase, but in a very different way from John Blow's character 35 years before. Venus, who appears as he is departing on yet another hunt, reveals her love for him which he scorns. On return from the hunt, he falls asleep, is kissed by Venus and awakes in love. Mars, also in love with Venus, watches this jealously, and arranges that Adonis's spear will shatter at the vital moment. He is gored by the boar, and as the defeated Venus retreats to heaven, she curses mankind to suffer in love as she has done.

These themes of love, loss, rejection and transformation are found in each of the subsequent pastoral masques. In *Myrtillo and Laura*, Cibber takes up the Beatrice and Benedict theme of the quarrelling lovers who at first hide their love for one another, and then reveal it through their friends' stratagems. In *Apollo and Daphne*, others in the masque attempt to persuade the chaste Daphne to

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accept Apollo's unwanted love. When she refuses, he as Phoebus tries to seduce her. As she flees, she calls on the river-god Peneus to protect her, and is transformed into a laurel tree.<sup>49</sup> *The Death of Dido* follows the same part of the legend as Tate's *Dido and Aeneas*, but without the ambiguities. Here, the entire incident is the result of infighting between the gods, and like *Venus and Adonis*, there is a short moral: those who trust in man will be undone.

I have included in Table II iv 6 one other Hughes masque, a short piece called *Cupid and Hymen's Holiday*. This does not appear to have been set and cannot even be dated. However, the second decade of the century, when Hughes was most interested in the form, seems the most likely. No libretto survives, although the text appears in various editions of Hughes's works, and in the big Harrison collection from 1781.<sup>50</sup> In the light of the themes of the earlier masques, it is somewhat disconcerting to discover that its theme is the reconciliation of marriage - seen as everlasting bondage - with love - which is often transitory and 'purchas'd at a rate too dear'.

The four masques are also linked by the two sopranos, Margherita De l'Epine and Jane Barbier. As Table II iv 7 shows, the four masques were written for almost the same forces, and the two sopranos sang in each. De l'Epine was later to marry Pepusch, and it is probable that Burney's description of her physique explains her success in these breeches parts:

Besides being *outlandish*, she was so swarthy and ill-favoured, that her husband used to call her *Hecate*, a name to which she answered with so much good humour as if he had called her Helen.<sup>51</sup>

There was, however, clearly more to it than that:

But with such a total absence of personal charms, our galleries would have made her songs very short, had they not been executed in such a manner to silence theatrical snakes, and command applause.<sup>52</sup>

She was to have a similar role written for her; she played *Syrinx* in *Pan and Syrinx* by Theobald and Galliard after she had moved in 1717 to Lincoln's Inn Fields. Jane Barbier was an equally accomplished performer in breeches, counting among her male roles Eustazio and the title role in Handel's *Rinaldo* and *Telemachus* in *Calypso and Telemachus*. She was to play one more part in a masque, that of Britannia in Arne's *Love and Glory* in 1734.

An intimation of what an audience had in store for them when attending this first group of masques is contained in the newspaper advertisement for the first performance of *Venus and Adonis* on 12 March 1715:

A New Musical Masque...in two several Interludes, compos'd after the Italian manner and perform'd all in English.<sup>53</sup>

Combs of the phrase 'After the Italian manner' were to become popular during this decade, and again in the early 1730s.

The preface to Cibber's libretto, which was sold at the theatre, stated clearly the aims of the project. It was not concerned with encouraging English music, for, as the advertisement stated, it was 'compos'd after the Italian manner'. In any case, Cibber felt that,

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despite the absurdities of Italian opera, he had to

*allow the Excellencies of the Italian Compositions; the Manner of it being indisputably superior to all Nations for a Theatre: And 'tis hoped this Entertainment will want for nothing of the Italian but the language.*<sup>54</sup>

The point of the exercise was to

*Attempt to give the Town a little good Musick in a language they understand: For no Theatrical Performance can be absolutely good that is not Proper; and how can we judge of its Propriety, when we know not one Word of the Voice's Meaning, But perhaps this is not all that the Italian Language has of late impos'd upon us; most of our Opera's being (if possible) as miserably void of Common Sense in their Original, as the Translation:...It is therefore hoped that this Undertaking, if encourag'd, may in time reconcile Musick to the English Tongue. And, to make the Union more practicable, it is humbly moved, that it may be allowed a less Inconvenience, to hear the Performer express his Meaning with an imperfect Account, than in Words, that (to an English Audience) have no Meaning at all: And at worst, it will be an easier Matter to instruct two or three performers in tolerable English than to teach a whole Nation Italian.*<sup>55</sup>

Cibber goes on to deal with the abuses of music and text,

suggesting that his attempt has a higher artistic aim than those of the Italian mould, which are altered and reworked at will:

*Nay, the Tyranny is carried yet farther; for the Songs are so often turn'd out of their Places to introduce some absurd favourite Air of the Singer, that in a few Days the first Book you have bought, is reduc'd to little more than the Title-Page of what it pretends to; and as it now stands, the whole Entertainment seems to be dwindled into a Concert of Instruments; for a Voice that is not understood, has in reality no more Meaning than the Fiddle which plays it [sic]: And thus, slavishly giving up our language to the despotick Power of Sound only, we are so far from establishing Theatrical Musick in England that the very Exhibition or Silence of it seems entirely to depend upon the Arrival or Absence of some Eminent Foreign Performer. By this sort of Conduct, the vast Sums that have been levied for the Support of it, have only ended in its Abuse and Prostitution. And (though the insolent Charms of the Opera seem to above it) why should we suppose that a little plain Sense should do Musick any more harm, than Virtue does a Beautiful Woman? And 'tis but a melancholy Proof of its Power, that it has*

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*so long been able to keep Nonsense in countenance.*<sup>56</sup>

The published descriptions of these masques also lay claim to an Italian ideal - *The Death of Dido* - 'A New Masque, Set to Musick after the Italian Manner, and perform'd all in English'; *Myrtillo* - 'Dancing proper to the Masque...Never perform'd before. Compos'd to Music after the Italian Manner and performed all in English'; *Apollo and Daphne* - 'A New Musical Masque, perform'd all in English'; *Venus and Adonis* - A New Musical Masque...in two several Interludes, compos'd after the Italian manner and perform'd all in English'.

However, while this commentary initially seems to be the same as that drummed up by Hughes for *Calypso and Telemachus*, the organisation of the music in Pepusch's masques is quite different. The number of characters is smaller, there is no hint of the elaborate exit plan, and the arias are less demanding and less elaborate.

What Cibber's model was for this series of small all-sung masques is not clear. He may have been inspired by Congreve's *Judgment of Paris*, or if he had known it, Blow's all-sung setting of *Venus and Adonis*. As it was clearly his intention to have these works all-sung in the Italian manner, seems to be no foundation for the suggestion that Cibber looked 'back to the previous century' basing 'his libretto on older masques with spoken dialogue'.<sup>57</sup>

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One possibility is that Cibber and Pepusch took their inspiration from the all-sung comic intermezzo.<sup>58</sup> This continental tradition paralleled the early development of the afterpiece. The first report of an Italian intermezzo in England is found in the ubiquitous Dr Burney, who records its appearance at York Buildings in July of 1703:

In July, Italian *intermezzi*, or 'interludes and mimical entertainments of singing and dancing', were performed at York-buildings. This was the first attempt at dramatic Music, in action, perhaps in the Kingdom'<sup>59</sup>

This initial appearance may have been an isolated event; the first traceable performance of such a work is one that took place in 1710. Again, Burney provides some details:

There were, indeed, intermezzi between the acts, in English, and sung by Dogget, Mrs. Lindsey, and Mrs Cross; but the opera [*Almahide*] was wholly Italian in poetry, Music and performance.<sup>60</sup>

The work in question was *Flora and Blesa*, an intermezzo by Bononcini. The evidence comes piecemeal: on 16 March 1710, the work '*Flora and Blesa*' a 'Comical Interlude...Set to Musick by the famous Signior [sic] Bononcini', was performed at the Queen's Theatre, with *The Recruiting Officer*, the parts by Dogget and Lindsey.<sup>61</sup> On 6 July of the same year, with *The Old Batchelor*, again performed by Dogget and Lindsey, the '*Interlude of Flora and Blesa* (from *Almahide*)' was announced.<sup>62</sup>

The three singers also sang minor roles in the opera, but Fiske's conjecture that they sang these parts in English because the words were published in 'Italian and English as they are perform'd at the Queen's Theatre', is contradicted by the *Almahide* libretto which

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has an English translation of the text on the lefthand side, and the original Italian on the right for the entire opera.<sup>63</sup>

Their function, however, was similar. The intermezzo was, according to Henry Carey, the author of the libretti of English operas and masques in the 1730s, to provide 'little starts of fancy' which 'afford a pleasant diversion, and supply a vacancy on the stage, while other entertainments are getting ready'.<sup>64</sup> Although he was probably referring to other later intermezzi, it is safe to say here that, the seriousness with which the authors approached their self-imposed task notwithstanding, the masques would have been viewed as 'little starts of fancy'. However, it is unlikely that they 'supplied a vacancy' while preparations were made for other things. The stage directions in the libretti of these pieces also suggest that the pastoral masques were more elaborate than the intermezzi, and not really suitable for use as fillers:

The first Scene is a River. Peneus, a River-God appears on a Bed of Rushes, leaning on his Urn. He rises and comes forward, his Head crown'd with Rushes and Flowers, a Reed in his Hand.<sup>65</sup>

Further, only in *Myrtillo* is there a plot which is light and comic - the girl, in love with the man but stringing him along and torturing him for the audience's amusement - although one might expect it to have been accomplished with stock characters, more comedy and less refinement than is found in Hughes's libretto, and the fact is that she wins him, and they are clearly set to live happily ever after.

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However, the connection between the afterpieces under discussion and the intermezzo is tenuous at best, for the subjects and characteristics of the latter form a distinct genre.<sup>66</sup> The ground they and the afterpiece have in common is that initially both were repositories for ideas and music which were considered inappropriate for inclusion in the mainpiece of the evening. Both could also be crucial to a larger work's reception; as Burney remarked of the later intermezzo, 'few operas would go down without this coarse sauce'<sup>67</sup>, while Cumberland congratulated himself that his play, *The West Indian*, had for 'eight and twenty successive nights' been presented 'without the buttress of an afterpiece, which was not then the practice of attaching to a new play'.<sup>68</sup> The popularity of both forms was due in no small measure to their brevity, to their subjects, and to the welcome relief they provided the audience from the not infrequently tedious mainpieces.

One other aspect needs to be taken into account here, and that is the development of the multi-faceted theatrical bill, a development of which these masques were part. The inclusion of the afterpiece as a matter of course in theatrical programmes, seems to have been the result of competition between the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane and the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields in the 1714-15 season. Kevin Pry's analysis of performance figures shows a small but regular use of the double bill from the beginning of the century until this season;<sup>69</sup> the increase was in the order of 700%, and undermines Emmett L. Avery's description in *The London Stage* of its appearance as a 'trend'.<sup>70</sup> The introduction of the pantomime during the 1720s

again increased the number of multi-faceted bills; the crucial season of 1723-4 included 165 afterpieces on a total of 370 theatrical programmes. Thereafter, it became part of the regular diet for London theatre audiences. Interludes of the late seventeenth and earlier eighteenth centuries, such as the already mentioned Motteux's *Acis and Galatea* or Taverner's *Ixion*, are not really 'afterpieces', but as has been shown, were much shorter works that grew out of the interpolated masque tradition.

The masques were performed on programmes with the spoken plays so dear to the London audiences; no attempt was made to insert them in two parts between the three acts of all-sung opera. The pastoral masques provided music between the acts of spoken plays - between the acts of which play was irrelevant, for there was no attempt whatever to link them either in the manner of the earlier theatrical masques, or in the more superficial methods employed by the Italians in the intermezzo. Clearly, only one interlude was desirable and practical, hence the frequency of the performances of one part of *Venus and Adonis*,<sup>71</sup> the score at the Royal College of Music which was copied for the 1718 revivals without act divisions, and the composition of later masques in one interlude.<sup>72</sup> When *Venus and Adonis* was performed in two parts - for example, in *Love makes a Man* at the revival at Lincoln's Inn Fields on 20 November 1718 - it was an unusual enough event to be stated in the advertisement.<sup>73</sup>

The performance of masques between the acts of spoken plays had implications for their orchestration. That the band was used only

for the masque and some incidental music, is reflected in the small scale of the orchestration, which may have depended partly on the obvious need for economy.

Each of the two halves of the masque proceed by recitative and aria, with a duet to finish each half; this organisation is that found in *Venus and Adonis*. Of the one interlude pieces, a duet occurs approximately half way through *Apollo and Daphne*, giving it the same musical shape as *Venus and Adonis*. In *The Death of Dido*, the interlude divisions are found in the libretto, but not in the score. Of necessity, it has three rather than two duets: one after Dido and Aeneas accept one another, one as they part for the last time, and one between Mercury and Cupid as a finale.

While only the airs from *Calypso and Telemachus* survive to provide a comparison here, the style of recitative used by Pepusch clearly aspired to that of Italian *opera seria*; nearly all of it is *secco* recitative, confined to conveying the action, and is, in Pepusch's case at least, harmonically not very adventurous. For the most part, the continuo line is restricted almost entirely to semi-breve and minim movement, although there are a few exceptions to this; in *Venus and Adonis*, they occur either side of Venus's aria 'Chirping Warblers' during which she is persuading Adonis to love her; the first is at the point where Venus kisses the sleeping Adonis, the second paints the love she sends to him as he stirs. (see examples II iv 1a and 1b) In *The Death of Dido* (example II iv 1c), a similar exception is found accompanying Aeneas's breaking the news to Dido

that

*Hermes, by the Doom of Jove,  
This moment warn'd me from my Love!  
Charg'd me to Latium bend my Way!*<sup>74</sup>

Accompanied recitative is employed at moments of dramatic importance - in *Apollo and Daphne* for example, Daphne uses it when she sings of her vow to remain a member of Diana's spotless train, while it accompanies Apollo, as he considers the pain of a mortal conquered by one he once scorned.<sup>75</sup> (see examples II iv 2a and 2b) These are two crucial moments in the action, points on which the plot turns. There is one further piece, that which accompanies Apollo when he blesses and protects the tree. (see example II iv 2c) An extra compliment is paid here to the Royal family, for it is from this tree that their victor's crowns shall be made:

*No Thunder e'er shall blast thy Boughs,  
Preserv'd to grace Apollo's Brows,  
Kings, Victors, Poets to adorn;  
Oft' in Britannia's Isle thy prosp'rous Green  
Shall on the Heads of her great Chiefs be seen,  
And by a NASSAU, and a GEORGE, be worn.*<sup>76</sup>

*Venus and Adonis* also contains a piece of dramatic *recitativo stromentato*, which grows out of a piece of *secco* - as Venus mourns Adonis, she conjures up thunder and lightening in a great tempest and her words are punctuated by vigorous string interjections. This leads into two bars of sustained chords - 'O pleasing horror, O melodious yell' - and then tails off gently in a *pianissimo* section as Venus contemplates Nature's grief at the loss of Adonis. (example II iv 3)

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The *da capo* aria is prominent - of the 29 musical pieces in *Venus and Adonis*, 14 are *da capo* arias. Similar proportions can be found in *Myrtillo* and *Apollo and Daphne*, who both have 8 out of totals of 16 and 18 respectively. Only in *The Death of Dido* is the total number of *da capo* arias equal to the total of other airs and duets, and the proportion of the total falls to 7 out 20 musical pieces.<sup>77</sup> However, these are more elaborate in character, being more on the scale of those of an *opera seria*, with long elaborate melismas, and none of the ironical hints found in those of *Myrtillo*. *The Death of Dido*, in any case, was written for Mrs Barbier's benefit; she had sung in all the earlier pastoral masques, and this was probably designed as vehicle for her vocal abilities.

It is the comic character of *Myrtillo* that provides Pepusch with the widest range of possibilities when composing the score. For example, he employs the 12/8 siciliano, conventionally used in opera to accompany pathetic sentiments in the opening number; Laura is desperate to be wooed by Myrtillo, but although she knows she loves him, she teases him continually. The form is used again in a similar situation towards the end of the masque, when the shepherdess Mopsa is persuading the reluctant couple that they should agree that they love each other, and marry. It might be expected that, in a comedy, there was at least a possibility that ritornelli to some of the airs and arias would be omitted in search of the greater realism referred to by contemporary commentators. Pepusch here retains them all, except that of 'Now you move me with complaining' which is approached via the extensive accompanied

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recitative 'O my anguish' which functions almost as a short piece of *arioso* in the *secco* recitative 'O Mopsa' and secondly, that to the *siciliano* 'Now all ye swains', a three verse air by Mopsa, the lower class foil to Laura, in which each verse is punctuated by *secco* recitative. Elements of the *buffo* style can be found in the exaggerated melismatic setting of words such as 'restless', 'delight' and 'tortures', and in the pointed falling intervals on 'sigh' and 'die'. The sense of 'Hence will I hasten to some dismal grove' - Myrtillo is going to the grove to die alone and forgotten by the world - is painted by the equally exaggerated harmonies and the ironical use of accompanied recitative, which, as has already been noted, is usually reserved for moments of dramatic importance. (example II iv 4)

It should not be supposed that the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields ignored the initial success of these works, nor as Table II iv 8 shows, having acknowledged it, that it failed to respond to the public's apparent enthusiasm. Indeed, the figures quoted above of performances of afterpieces, demonstrates that John Rich's response was swift. The first move made by Rich towards masques that were similar to Cibber's, was to revive John Eccles's setting of Motteux's masque *Acis and Galatea*. Its original performances at the theatre had been on 24? June? 1701; it was revived at the Queen's Theatre on 12 November 1709 when only the comic part (the 'loves of Roger and Joan') was played. The next six performances at the Queen's Theatre were in this truncated version, the last being on 7 March 1710. On 27 August 1714 at Drury Lane there was a performance

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of a masque 'not performed these five years' called *The Country Wedding* with the characters of Roger and Joan; this had been performed again on 30 August. This 'masque' must be the comic part again. However, on 22 November 1715, the masque was revived in its original form. By this stage, *Venus and Adonis* and *Myrtillo* at the rival theatre had already been given 14 and 5 performances respectively. *Acis and Galatea* had a further six performances at Lincoln's Inn Fields, the last being for Mrs Hunt's Benefit on 14 April 1716. The total number of performances and their cessation at this date contradicts Hume's claim that the work remained popular until the appearance on the London stage of Handel's setting of the story in 1732.<sup>78</sup>

*Acis and Galatea* was followed on 3 December by a revival of *The Prophetess* on 3 December 1715, 'Not Acted these Sixteen Years', which included the famous masque at the end of Act V; it was regularly performed until at least the middle of 1717. Then came the comic pastoral masque, *The Mountebank or the Country Lass*. Little is known about this piece, apart from the few surviving song texts; the music was by the bass Richard Leveridge, who sang the part of the Mountebank. It was first performed on 21 December 1715.

In the anonymous preface to the next new masque, the author - probably William Taverner - takes up Colley Cibber's cudgel:

*I own here is a great deal of Room for fine Machinery  
Decoration of the Stage, and the like; but as that wou'd  
have encreas'd the Expences of the House too  
considerably, we hope the Musick to the Masque will  
prove as agreeable an Entertainment to the Town, as hath  
been produced in the kind for some Years; for the*



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*composing of which, we own ourselves obliged to Mr. William Turner, who hath happy Genius in Naturalizing Italian music into a true English Manner, without losing the Spirit and Farce [force?] of the Original in the Imitation, or the Masterly Touches of the Art in the Composition.*<sup>79</sup>

To a large extent, *Acis and Galatea* and *The Mountebank*, had continued the pastoral themes which were occupying Drury Lane, but Turner's piece, although supposedly in the Italian manner, had a classical plot. In fact, it was the same plot that had been used in the masque of *Ixion* in *The Italian Husband* in 1698. Here, however, the work is divided into two acts or interludes, and, using recitatives and arias, is organised in a manner similar to that of the pastoral masques, rather than in the entries of a classical masque.

Richard Leveridge's *Pyramus and Thisbe*, written and performed by him for his own Benefit at Lincoln's Inn Fields on 11 April 1716, was a comic masque based on Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, but which here satirised Italian opera. Its antecedents are numerous - Thomas Duffett's *Mock Tempest*, *The Empress of Morocco*, and *Psyche Debauch'd* for example - but the model for such satire seems to have been George Villiers's *The Rehearsal* of 1672, which was the earliest of the works mentioned above. It is also the piece that established the rehearsal-play-within-a-play idea, which is the central device of *Pyramus and Thisbe*. As Leveridge tells us in the Preface:

*as our present Encouragers of this Part of the Theatrical Labours, have for some late Years been chiefly regaled with high Recitative and Buskin Arias; I have here endeavoured the quite Reverse of those exulted Performances ; and hope I may challenge some small Excuse*

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*for this Exotick Essay, from no less than Precedent.*<sup>30</sup>

The 'exotick essay' is the story of the encounter between Pyramus and Thisbe, with commentary provided by Mr Semibreve the composer, Mr Crotchet and Mr Gamut. Points of ridicule of Italian opera include complaints that passions when sung about take too long, absurdities such as the singing lion and dead characters performing the epilogue and, as Mr Crotchet tells us, the lack of realism:

I assure you the Man died well, like a Hero in an *Italian Opera*, to very good Time and Tune.<sup>31</sup>

Neither does dramattick opera escape humourous censure. The animation of objects such as the wall, the inclusion of monkeys and other fauna, and the use of transformations are also remarked on in the Preface:

*I know no Reason why I may not...make them as Diverting as a Dance of Chairs and Butterflies have been in one of our most Celebrated British Entertainments.*<sup>32</sup>

Even the plight of the authors and composers in the theatrical world is deemed worthy of Semibreve's comment:

If this won't fetch a Subscription, I'll never pretend to Compose *Opera*, or *Mask* again while I live.<sup>33</sup>

Fiske's incorrect placing of this work at Drury Lane obscures the possibility that, as the Preface above implies, it was intended to be a parody of works performed at the rival house.<sup>34</sup> Not only was it advertised as 'A Comic Masque, compos'd in the high Style of Italy', but the word 'masque' is liberally - and erratically - substituted for the word 'opera'.<sup>35</sup> There was a single revival of this work in a Royal Command performance on 2 September 1723 at Penkethman's Theatre, Richmond, where it was advertised as 'a diverting droll'.<sup>36</sup> Sadly, no music belonging to this piece has

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survived, but Leveridge's libretto made a popular return to the stage in the 1740s with a new score by Lampe.

The performance figures of the masques at the two theatres are compared in the Table II iv 9; they show that the masques were not as popular as this discussion might suggest. Further, the performance in 1716 of *Acis and Galatea*, for example, was for Mrs Hunt's benefit, while *The Death of Dido* seems to have been written for Mrs Barbier's benefit on 17 and 24 April - she sang the role of Aeneas. The performance on the last day of the same month was at the 'particular Desire of several Ladies of Quality'.<sup>87</sup> While the work clearly belongs to the same group, its appearance is not evidence of a commercial success. Indeed, in concentrating on these masques, it is easy to forget that during this same period, the theatres had in their repertoire, as they had had since the late seventeenth century, works such as the Motteux/Clarke, Purcell dramattick opera extravaganza, *The Island Princess*, which included the masque *The Four Seasons or Love in Every Age*.

After the activity of the last two years, the 1716-1717 season was bare of any attempts to write and perform new operatic pieces in English, the season of Italianate masques having bumbled its way out, even before the performance of *The Death of Dido*. Much has been made by scholars of the fact that Pepusch, taking L'Epine and Barbier with him, moved to Lincoln's Inn Fields at the beginning of this season, but this move appears to have had no immediate effect on new performances at the theatre, nor on that of Drury Lane.<sup>88</sup>

However, early in 1717, on 1 January, Lincoln's Inn Fields started a sporadic flirtation with Italian opera in English with 15 performances of *Camilla*, followed on 9 May with 2 performances of *Thomyris*.

In the 1718-1719 season, John Ernest Galliard apparently persuaded John Rich to allow him to stage a group of his own works at Lincoln's Inn Fields, as shown in Table II iv 10. The first work in this season was the new masque *Pan and Syrinx*, a small one act work. It was advertised as an opera, but is in the same style as the early pastoral masques, and is divided into two acts or interludes.<sup>89</sup> This was followed just over a month later by a revival of the much longer *Calypso and Telemachus* from 1712, with even less success than its original staging.

On 22 March 1718, a new dramattick opera by Theobald called *The Lady's Triumph* made its appearance. As its finale, it had the new Galliard masque, *Decius and Paulina* in seven scenes. The music does not survive, but the libretto shows the predominance of the *da capo* form.<sup>90</sup> The story is of Marcellus, who is in love with Paulina, but who suspects her of loving another. Decius is in love with Paulina and presses his suit; she is virtuous however, and rejects him. He attempts to trick her into submission by persuading the high priestess of Isis to disguise him as the god Anubis, and is unmasked by Marcellus. Decius then resigns his claim to her hand. In fact, the plot has the number and type of characters that one would expect to find in some Italianate operas - two important

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characters in love with one another, their confidantes (in this plot also in love with one another) and two other characters, the protagonist and the high priestess of the temple in which the denouement takes place.

Far from being the simple revival claimed by Fiske, and again by Dean and Knapp, the 1719 performances of this masque with the dramatic opera *Circe* were of a new version of the work.<sup>91</sup> Table II iv 11 lists the songs from the 1719 libretto,<sup>92</sup> indicates the material which also appeared in the 1718 version and lists those songs not used.<sup>93</sup> It also shows that the song 'O Realms of Night! O gloomy powers!' was taken from *The Lady's Triumph*, and inserted into the masque itself.

The next theatrical season saw a revival of Pepusch's *Venus and Adonis* at the theatre. The first performance took place 18 November 1718; there were a total of twelve performances, six of which were of one part only.<sup>94</sup> In the performance on 22 November 1718, the piece was substituted for the masque in Purcell's *The Prophetess*.

The one remaining masque is Handel's *Acis and Galatea*, performed at Cannons in the summer of 1718. The work's performance history has already been extensively discussed in Chapter II 1 i, but a few points should be made here. Firstly, Pepusch himself had been Master of Music to the Duke of Chandos since 1712, and Hughes, the author of *Apollo and Daphne*, was friendly with Handel. Secondly, Dean mounts a convincing case showing that *Acis and Galatea*, a text

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which also involved Hughes, was based on that of *Apollo and Daphne*.<sup>35</sup> However, although these two factors tie *Acis and Galatea* firmly into the pastoral masque tradition, they do not place Handel at 'the head of the movement'. Dean's comment

Had *Acis and Galatea* been written for the London theatre rather than a nobleman's private entertainment, subsequent events might have taken a different course.<sup>36</sup>

and Fiske's equally pious hope:

it is as actable as any English masque, and its production might have both encouraged English opera and interested Handel in its problems.<sup>37</sup>

are based on the presumption that the audience, recognising the superiority of Handel's score, would have ensured the work's success. Indeed, all the facts and statistics cited above show the public had limited interest in this sort of entertainment. Had *Acis and Galatea* been publicly performed in 1718, it would probably have gone the way of everything else, for although one more revival of *Venus and Adonis* can be mentioned - Barbier, Leveridge and Rochetti in the characters of Venus, Mars and Adonis, chose the work for their respective benefits on 15 March, and 2 and 12 April 1725 - this was the end of the period of experiment by the theatres in all-sung masques in English. As the disenchanted Colley Cibber put it:

Our *English* music has been so discountenanced, since the Taste of *Italian* operas prevail'd, that it was to no purpose to pretend to it.<sup>38</sup>

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**Milton's *Comus* in the Eighteenth Century**

The Italianate masque never again flourished as it had under Cibber and Pepusch. Although the texts were reset later in the century, no libretti or scores survive, and none received more than a few performances.<sup>99</sup> There was one piece, however, which had similar a pastoral theme and which captured the public's imagination, and it became one of the most successful masques of the century. This was *A Mask at Ludlow*, known in the eighteenth century as *Comus*. The text of this masque was by Milton, and the original songs were set by Henry Lawes. What John Dalton started with in 1738 was a small-scale masque with a series of highly complex literary images, and some extremely long speeches. Obviously what was designed for presentation by children before their parents in the hall of their home in 1634, was not necessarily attractive to Drury Lane theatre audiences in the late 1730s; Dalton's main criterion was, therefore, the suitability of the text for public theatrical presentation. A close examination of the result also shows a precise understanding of Milton's ideas. Dalton was a poet and a divine, and at the time he adapted *Comus*, was tutor to Lord Beauchamp, the only son of the Earl of Hertford.<sup>100</sup>

As Table II iv 12 shows, Dalton worked from the 1645 authorised publication, for his text includes much that is only found in this version. Collation with the Bridgewater manuscript shows that no distinctive material from this source was included. Milton's

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structure of music and airs interspersed with spoken dialogue was undoubtedly Dalton's model. There is no reason to suppose as Fiske does, that Arne and Dalton were emulating the Purcell-style 'dramatick opera' with spoken dialogue.<sup>101</sup>

The need to present the ideas more pointedly to a theatre audience was responsible for the alterations to the *dramatis personae*. The role of the Attendant Spirit became principally a spoken part, and was divided into three. The first and second Spirits fulfil the function of the original role. The first opens the masque, and desires 'some messenger from *Jove*' to assist him; and 'As swift as thought, he comes the gentle *Philadel*'. His function is to break up the long monologues, and emphasise the action contained in the original dialogue. The first spirit directs a speech of Milton's to *Philadel*, a speech which originally referred to the Earl of Bridgewater's new presidency:

but this Isle,  
The greatest and the best of all the Main  
He quarters to his blue-hair'd Deities;  
And all this Tract that fronts the falling Sun  
A noble Peer of mickle Trust and Power  
Has in his Charge, with temper'd Awe to guide  
An old and haughty Nation, proud in Arms.<sup>102</sup>

The Second Spirit interjects and helps to clarify the political standing of the Earl and the subject of the masque:

Does any Danger threat his legal Sway  
From bold Sedition, or close ambush'd Treason?<sup>103</sup>

The First Spirit returns:

No Danger thence. But to his lofty Seat,  
With borders on the Verge of this wild Vale,  
His blooming Offspring nurs'd in Princely Love,  
Are coming to attend their Father's State.<sup>104</sup>

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Thus established, this conversational style continues throughout the opening scene. At the end, the First Attendant Spirit, as in the original version, prepares to give support to those 'favoured high of Jove'. The first, disguised as Damon the shepherd, will make it his task 'The sever'd Youths to guide, to their distressed and lonely Sister:'<sup>105</sup>, while the second's task will be to 'cheer [The Lady's] Footsteps through the Magick Wood'.<sup>106</sup> Dalton's addition at the end of the section brings to the attention of the audience what was before only to be conjectured:

Whatever Blessed Spirit hovers near,  
On Errands bent to wand'ring Mortals Good  
If Need require, him summon to thy Side.  
Unseen of Mortal Eye, such Thoughts inspire,  
Such Heaven-born Confidence, as Need demands  
In Hour of Trial.<sup>107</sup>

The Attendant Spirit's role no longer unfolds gradually as the masque proceeds: it is presented clearly and distinctly in these two parts at the outset, and the audience can now expect the Spirits to manipulate the action.

Dalton makes little use of the Second Spirit elsewhere in the masque, thereby confirming that his creation was merely to preserve the emphasis of the opening speeches for the audience. One would expect the Second Attendant Spirit to accompany The Lady, even if only as an invisible figure to offer her strength and give her courage throughout the masque. But he does not; nor does he summon Sabrina. The only encouragement he offers to The Lady is during her temptation by Comus. The other lines given to the Second Spirit are in the final scene when the two spirits speak alternate lines of

the final section of the masque. The role of the first Attendant Spirit remains intact; he counsels the Brothers in their bewilderment and directs them not only to their sister, but to an understanding of the higher virtues. I mentioned that the role of the Attendant Spirit was divided into three. There is a Third Attendant Spirit, whose sole function, and, indeed, whose only appearance on stage, is to sing the accompanied recitative 'Sabrina Fair', which summons the chaste nymph to view.

The second alteration to the *dramatis personae* is the introduction of the nymph representing Euphrosyne or mirth, borrowed from *L'Allegro*. Dalton gives Comus lines from Milton's *L'Allegro*, to effect her introduction:

But come thou Goddess fair and free  
In Heaven ycleap'd Euphrosyne,  
And by men, heart-easing Mirth;  
Whom lovely Venus, at a birth,  
With two Sisters Graces more,  
To Ivy-covered Bacchus bore.  
Haste thee, Nymph, and bring with thee  
Jest and youthful Jollity,  
Quips, and pranks, and wanton wiles,  
Nods, and Becks, and wreathed Smiles...<sup>108</sup>

The lines also serve to emphasise Comus's own moral degeneracy and the disorder of his court.

Not only does the resolution of the masque survive Dalton's revisions, it is pushed forward by the Lady's Brothers. The two Brothers in conversation with their guide, the First Spirit, admit to him their changed perceptions of the world. The Elder Brother now has experience, rather than innocence, for he heard

but ne'er believ'd till now,

There are, who can by potent magick Spells  
Bend to their crooked Purpose Nature's Laws,  
Blot the fair Moon from her resplendent Orb,  
Bid whirling Planets stop their destin'd Course,  
And thro' the yawning Earth from *Stygian* Gloom  
Call up their meagre Ghost to Walks of Light.<sup>109</sup>

He sees his new-found wisdom with a clarity which would have been impossible at the opening of the masque:

Yet still the Freedom of the Mind, you see,  
No Spell can reach; the righteous *Jove* forbids,  
Lest Man should call his frail Divinity  
The Slave of Evil, or the Sport of Chance.<sup>110</sup>

The Younger Brother has gained trust in heaven and an understanding of the strength it gives to man:

Why did I doubt? Why tempt the Wrath of Heaven  
To shed just Vengeance on my weak Distrust?  
Here spotless Innocence has found Relief,  
By means as wond'rous as her strange Distress.<sup>111</sup>

These two speeches were inserted by Dalton before parts of the original verse, and interpret the brothers' experience for the audience, just in case it has missed the point.

The songs inserted by Dalton, and set by Thomas Arne, fulfil much the same function as Dalton's additions to the text. In each instance, they highlight or reflect upon a particularly important point in Milton's text. The contents of the 1738 version and its relationship to Lawes's settings can be seen in Table II iv 13. One statement concerning *Comus*, which is representative of a widespread attitude to masques and masque music, must be challenged. Fiske comments:

Inevitably, the music is undramatic, for in the original production the leading characters, The Lady, her two Brothers, and *Comus*, were nowhere called upon to sing a note. The songs were all given to subordinate characters

and are thus irrelevant to the action.<sup>112</sup>

It is clear from the Bridgewater manuscript that The Lady sang the song 'Sweet Echo, sweetest nymph'. It is also apparent that Sabrina and the Attendant Spirit, who sing the remainder of the music, are not referred to as 'the main characters' because they were not played by members of the Egerton family. It is an untenable position to base the claim for the lack of dramatic relevance on the allocation of the voice parts, for the songs are relevant to the action. The song 'Sweet Echo' illustrates the point; it is very carefully introduced into the masque:

I cannot hollowe to my brothers, but  
such noise as I can make to be heard fardest  
I'le vertue, for my new enliv'n'd sperrits,  
prompt me, and they perhaps are not far hence.<sup>113</sup>

The Lady, lost in the forest, calls for the sweet nymph Echo to give her guidance. Milton takes the opportunity to introduce some elegant musical imagery, as The Lady searches for the nymph:

Sweete Queene of parlie, daughter to the spheare  
soe mayst thou be translated to the skyes  
And hould a Counterpointe to all heav'ns harmonies<sup>114</sup>

As Table II iv 14 shows, this three act version was popular at both Theatres Royal. In 1772, however, it was Colman's brief to reduce the work to a two act afterpiece; it is clear from the result that he used Dalton's text, and did not return to Milton's. His method of adaptation was merely to reduce the existing speeches and, as Table II iv 15 shows, to cut several of Dalton's songs. The air 'By the gayly circling glass' has been moved to an equally appropriate place later in the masque, and a new song 'Thou wert born to please me' was set by Arne for the revision. There is also a second two

act version which appears in *Bell's British Theatre*. This is advertised as being the text 'as performed at the Theatres Royal in Drury-Lane and Covent-Garden', an all-purpose puff which suggests it was never performed at either playhouse. As Table II iv 16 shows, the reduction to two acts, gave *Comus* a new lease of life, with performances at both Theatres Royal, and, on on a least one occasion, on the same night.

Arne, Dalton and Colman were not the only figures who worked on *Comus* during the century. Handel's entanglement with the piece seems to have begun in 1740, when, after the success of Arne's score, he set Milton's *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*. As been mentioned, lines very near the opening of *L'Allegro* were used by Dalton as spoken text to open Act III, and these lines were among those that were set by Handel.<sup>115</sup> On 1 April 1742 the group of songs was included in a Drury Lane performance of Arne's setting.<sup>116</sup> Fiske suggests that Arne probably complained about this - a not unlikely possibility - and for the next performance, that of 15 May, they were dropped.<sup>117</sup>

In 1745, in an effort to gain peace and quiet, Handel had gone to stay with the Noel family at Exton Hall in Northumberland and the family had prevailed upon him to write some music for a private performance of *Comus*:

We had a Theatrical Entertainment here about a Fortnight ago, which was performed in Celebration of an Anniversary Festival. The piece was *Comus*; but Dalton and Arne were Judg'd not altogether equal to Handel and Milton... To do M<sup>r</sup> Dalton Justice, he has certainly done his parts extreamly well; but as we could not take him without

admitting his Musical Companion too, we determined to stick as close as we could to the original Author. We borrow'd indeed the help of a Second Spirit, which was necessary to open the Drama more Theatrically than in y<sup>e</sup> original; and took in two speeches in that part of M<sup>r</sup> Dalton's Play where the Lady is set at Liberty.<sup>119</sup>

The originality referred to here concerns the spoken text of Milton's masque only. Not only does the recently discovered manuscript libretto show that Lawes's settings were not used - this is not surprising - but it also indicates that Milton's original song texts were completely ignored.<sup>119</sup> It also shows that far from simply being a spoken text with Handel's newly written airs and chorus at the end, his other works were plundered for airs and incidental music, as Table II iv 17. The original texts of the songs are used at appropriate points - 'Behold the monstrous human beast' at the entrance of Comus, 'Come and trip it as ye go' after 'Come, knit hands, and beat the ground/In a light fantastick round' and so on - creating a complete Handelian pasticcio.

Not that all went smoothly:

T'was intended to have been perform'd in the Garden, but the weather would not favour that Design. We contrived however to entertain the Company there afterwards with an Imitation of Vaux Hall; and, in the Style of a Newspaper, *the whole concluded* with what variety of Fireworks we could possibly get.<sup>120</sup>

Benjamin Martyn's letter to Lord Shaftesbury in August 1748, gives some details of another performance of the work:

The Orchestra was full and open'd with an Overture of Handel's, after which Comus was presented; not as it is acted upon the Stage, but with a little Variation from the Original, two or three songs of Arne's were in it, which were well sung by one M<sup>r</sup> Randall, (Organist of King's College) in the Character of a Bacchanal...<sup>121</sup>

Clearly some revision had taken place between 1745 and 1748, for some of Arne's songs were included. From the above description they were probably 'Now Phoebus sinketh in the West', 'Fly Swiftly ye Minutes' and 'The Wanton God'. Benjamin Martyn also provides a detailed description of the scene:

Last Friday Evening, a little before Sun Set, we were all summon'd to a Grove in the Garden...After a little winding walk in it, we found our Selves in the midst of a Theatre, at one end of which was a Box with four Rows of Benches rais'd above one another, and 20 feet in front. The Intermediate space between that and the Stage was bounded on the Sides by high Trees...when *Comus* had the Revels begin, the Back Scene was drawn up and behind was another space, (of the same bigness as that where the Box and Theatre were) with a high Tree in the Middle, and surrounded by high ones, which were fill'd with Lights in the most agreeable Manner; so that the Stage fill'd with Actors who lin'd the side scenes (which were prettily painted) a Row of Lemon Trees with large fruit tied to the Boughs, just behind the Stage, and the Illuminated Grove beyond it, made the most Romantick Fairy Scene imaginable.<sup>122</sup>

As with most private masques and theatricals, the parts were taken by members of the family at Exton. The cast recounted by Martyn was as follows: *Comus* - Lord Gainsborough; The Lady - Lady Elizabeth Noel; *Bacchanal* - John Randall; Elder Brother - Hon James Noel; Sabrina - Lady Jennifer Noel; Spirit - Lady Juliana Noel; and a *Bacchanal* - Lord Campden.<sup>123</sup>

There are two surviving scores of Handel's music to *Comus*. One, that most recently discovered, is in St Giles' House, Wimbourne, Dorset, and is a copy that appears to relate to the first performance at Exton.<sup>124</sup> The second, that in the Manchester Public Library, contains the same items, but they are numbered 21, 22, 23 and 24, which suggests that it formed the closing sections of

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complete a score, revised and numbered for the 1748 performance.<sup>125</sup> It was certainly a longer work than the one represented by the libretto outlined in Table II iv 17.

It is impossible to make a case for allegorical links with the audience or with those taking part. Here the masque was a private entertainment, using the lines of a poet whose work had become fashionable and the music written by a house guest, with the music of a popular stage success being included in a later version.

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## II v Interlude II - The Pantomime Masque

Pantomime in Britain seems to have got off to a shaky start, perhaps not surprisingly, since it was a new form in the process of creation. Commedia dell'arte characters appeared in plays such as Aphra Behn's *The Empress of the Moon* in the 1680s and Motteux's *The Novelty* of 1697, a piece which also included *The Masque of Hercules*. John Weaver claims for himself the honour of the first pantomime in 1702, but it was not until 1717 that Weaver managed to persuade Colley Cibber at Drury Lane to stage the pantomime, *The Loves of Mars and Venus*.<sup>1</sup> This was a fully danced and mimed work, given meaning by the addition of the fable and with 'Dances in Character'.<sup>2</sup>

Cibber's seasons of English Masque 'after the Italian manner' had not been the success that he had hoped, and he gave the public's lack of response as the reason for his defection to spectacle. The quotation which ends the section of this thesis on Cibber's Italian masques - 'our *English Musick* had been so discountenanced, since the Taste of *Italian Operas* prevail'd, that it was no purpose to pretend to it' - continues:

Dancing therefore was, now, the only weight in the opposite Scale.<sup>3</sup>

Cibber went on to point out that 'as the New Theatre sometimes found Account in it, it could not be safe for us, wholly to neglect it'.<sup>4</sup> In reality, it was the company at Drury Lane who led the way, but once Lincoln's Inn Fields - and the public - had followed, it

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had no choice but to continue.<sup>5</sup> The financial benefits overcame Cibber's disgust at the acceptance even by the 'thinking Spectators', and pantomime became a regular feature of the theatrical season.

The pantomimes of the 1720s fall into two types, both which flourished at the same time at opposing theatres. Pantomime performances during this period are well documented - see Fiske, for example<sup>6</sup> - and the figures show that the pantomime was very popular, both Lincoln's Inn Fields and Drury Lane producing at least one new pantomime a year throughout the decade, and keeping many old ones in the repertoire. One type was mimed, the other involved the insertion of pantomime scenes into a masque-like entertainment. As Table II v 1 shows, both used classical and allegorical figures in some form. Those performed at Drury Lane were of a mimed variety, although in the case of *Harlequin Dr Faustus*, there appears to be a sung *Masque of the Deities* at the end that has no connection with the pantomime, while *Apollo and Daphne* or *Harlequin Mercury* opened and closed with short, sung, allegorical passages.

However, it is the serious pieces - which can reasonably be called 'masques' - of *Perseus and Andromeda*, and *The Rape of Proserpine* that have the greatest interest here. Both entertainments were offered by Lincoln's Inn Fields, and are of a type that is most accurately, if derogatorily, described by Henry Fielding in *Tom Jones*:

This Entertainment consisted of two Parts, which the Inventor distinguished by the Names of the *Serious* and the *Comic*. The *Serious* exhibited a certain Number of Heathen Gods and Heroes, who were certainly the worst and dullest Company into which an Audience was ever introduced; and (which was a Secret known to few) were actually intended to so be, in order to contrast the *Comic* Part of the Entertainment, and to display the Tricks of Harlequin to better Advantage.

This was, perhaps, no very civil Use of such Personages; but the Contrivance was nevertheless ingenious enough, and had its Effect. And this will now plainly appear, if instead of *Serious* and *Comic*, we supply the Words *Duller* and *Dullest*; for the *Comic* was certainly duller than any thing before shewn on the Stage, and could be set off only by that superlative Degree of Dullness, which composed the *Serious*. So intolerably serious, indeed, were these Gods and Heros, that Harlequin (tho' the *English* Gentleman of that Name is not at all related to the *French* Family, for he is of a much more serious Disposition) was always welcome on the Stage, as he relieved the Audience from worse Company.<sup>7</sup>

The type of pantomime described by Fielding can be seen in Table II v 2, which shows the construction of the first two scenes from *Perseus and Andromeda*. The plot here - Perseus, son of Jupiter, is presented by Mercury with a sword and a pair of wings, and by Minerva with the shield of Aegis; he sets off on his adventures and encounters Medusa - is shown by the transformations and entries. The story is advanced by spoken dialogue and is interspersed with songs and incidental music in the manner of a dramattick opera. At the scene change, we read that the 'comic part' begins. Unfortunately, no more details are available. The piece closes with a 'serious' part, ending with the chorus

Albion, the Queen of Nations grow,  
Thy Fortune to thy Vertues owe.  
With Plenty shall thy Earth be crown'd,  
And Jove shall make thy Kings renown'd.

expressing sentiments which were to become the staple diet of audiences at occasional masques in the next decade.

These transformations are tame by comparison with those found in other libretti. *The Rape of Proserpine* includes a chariot drawn by dragons, an earthquake and an eruption of Mount Etna, while in *Orpheus in the Lower Regions* at Covent Garden, an enormous serpent with gold and green scales and a clockwork forest, which grew out of rocks, flowered and then fruited, could be seen.<sup>28</sup>

The transformations and antics of the pantomime masques which drew the public were extremely dangerous:

in the Entertainment of Dr. Faustus...when the Machine wherein Harlequin, the Miller's Wife, the Miller and his Man, was got up to the full Extent of its flying, one of the Wires which held up the hind part of the Car broke first, and then the other broke, and the Machine, and all the People in it fell down upon the Stage; by which unhappy Accident the young Woman who personated the Miller's Wife had her Thigh broke, and her Kneepan shatter'd, and was otherways very much bruised, the Harlequin had his head bruised and his Wrist strained; the Miller broke his Arm; and the Miller's Man had his Scull so fractured that his Life is despaired of.<sup>29</sup>

Perhaps anticipating similar catastrophe was part of the spectators' enjoyment.

It is these works with comic and serious scenes that can be called pantomime masques. Lewis Theobald, the main exponent of this type of pantomime text, had a serious view of his subject matter, and, if his Dedication to *The Rape of Proserpine* of 1727 is to be believed, a higher ideal than is readily apparent:

Though my Inclination to Musick frequently leads me to

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visit the *Italian* Opera; yet, I confess, it is not in the Power of the present Excellent Performers to prevent my falling into the very common Opinion, that there are many essential Requisites still wanting, to establish that Entertainment on a lasting Foundation, and adapt it to the Taste of an *English* Audience.<sup>10</sup>

This has echoes of the old arguments which had been current since about 1700. However, he blames the failure of attempts to introduce serious opera not on the problems of the language (Italian) and the 'general ill Choice of the Subjects for these Compositions', but on the lack of machinery, painting, dances and spoken dialogue, which have always been required in the English theatre to ensure the success of music.

The serious and comic scenes in *The Rape of Proserpine* have, therefore, a specific function. The former (dedicated to Thomas Chambers) is an attempt to show the audience what an opera could be like, while the comic part (dedicated to nobody at all) is the froth with which the public was to be weaned back on to opera in English, but with spoken dialogue. He was to put his ideas further into practice in the dramattick opera, *Orestes*, at Lincoln's Inn Fields in 1731.

It is significant that the composer with whom Theobald worked on these pieces was Galliard, the composer of the scores of *Calypso and Telemachus* and *Pan and Syrinx*. The similarities between the subject matter of the latter piece and the material used in the 'serious' parts are obvious.

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In pantomime, then, the emphasis behind the scenes was on attempts to promote opera in English, but the pantomime was, as Dean points out, an 'artistic boa constrictor'.<sup>11</sup> That it was the 'grotesque' or 'comic' part that ultimately triumphed is not surprising. The 'serious' parts - all the parts which were derived from the masque and English opera - disappeared, and the public enjoyed a diet of fantasy and transformations attached to the slenderest of plots. Ultimately, Harlequin triumphed over Jupiter, and the pantomime and the masque went on to other things.

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## II vi The Occasional Masque

On Peace and Freedom, Arts and Commerce grow;  
From This shall Wealth, from Those shall Glory flow:  
Then let the Sons of Trade and Science raise  
The chearful Voice of Gratitude and Praise.

Robert Dodsley  
*The Triumph of Peace* 1749

## English Operatic Experiments 1731-2

The foregoing discussion illustrates how far the masque had ceased to be an 'occasional' event; although some interpolated masques have passing references to external events, and the *Secular Masque* is, of course, exceptional in this respect. The masques in spoken drama relate to the play, not to external events. The independent classical and pastoral masques, although sometimes performed as celebrations, are often moral tales without particular reference to the performers, or those to whom the masque is presented. The form was being consciously used as a vehicle for operatic experiments, and composers and authors were once more to be stimulated to write such pieces by yet another attempt to establish English opera on the stage.

An 'occasional' masque, for the purposes of the immediate discussion, is one written to celebrate a particular event such as the signing of a treaty or the wedding of a member of the

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aristocracy, and in which the action is either an allegory or a representation of the event.

Several examples of this type of masque writing can be found between the 1690s and the 1730s. The first of these pieces is the entertainment *Europe's Revels on the Peace*, written and performed in 1697. The libretto was by Pierre Motteux and the score was by John Eccles. It celebrated the signing of the treaty of Ryswick at the end of seven years of war and was one of the most important events in late seventeenth-century British foreign policy; it was also a military, diplomatic and personal triumph for William III. The details of this treaty are complex and need not be recounted here.<sup>1</sup> Its satisfactory completion rested initially on the recognition by Louis XIV of the Glorious Revolution and the future of James II, who was living in exile in France; it seemed to assure the protection of Britain against the tyranny feared by all of the country, and the Popery feared by some of it. These fears had prompted Parliament to send James II into exile in 1688, and to replace him with William and Mary.

According to the title page of the libretto, the masque was first performed at the theatre in 'Little LINCOLN'S-INN-fields'.<sup>2</sup>

However, other sources record a performance at Court by the combined Betterton and Rich companies on 4 November 1697, the day which was traditionally celebrated as William III's birthday.<sup>3</sup> No collateral evidence such as records of payments can be found for either of the performances; further complicating the issue, the



libretto and the manuscript appear to relate to different performances - the differences between them can be found detailed in Table II vi 1.

The masque opens with Britain being called to arms by the trumpet and drums; the country's brave population scrambles to enlist in William's army. Although the battle the army fights is bloody, the platoons are successful, and as war and discord cease, William is praised by different nations. Members of the populace decide *en masse* to marry, now that the cannon fire has ceased, and the final chorus rejoices at William's return. The central theme of the masque is the character of William; to him is ascribed an outstanding ability to lead the army in battle, and a diplomacy which is likened to Neptune's and to Jove's. The duet between a young couple conveys the dubious information that being in the army makes men handsome, whilst the weddings are an allegory of the prosperity and fertility of the nation now that peace has arrived. The whole purpose of the entertainment was to honour the King, and pays lip-service to the pre-Commonwealth masque form in the emblematic treatment of the characters, the inclusion of dancing, the celebratory ending and the classical allusions in the text.

The libretto shows that the piece falls into three parts, for there are two discrete musical sequences either side of a section of spoken dialogue. The musical sequences consist of dialogues and choruses in the Purcellian manner and a unifying, although obvious, key scheme - a general description of the music can be found in

Lincoln's *John Eccles; the last of a tradition*.<sup>4</sup> This particular balance of spoken text and music has only one precedent in the Restoration masque.<sup>5</sup>

The next occasional masque does not appear until the 1720s, but the pastoral masque, *Apollo and Daphne* of 1716, contains a short patriotic response to the Jacobite rebellion, the 'Fifteen', in the style of *Europe's Revels*. The demonstrations of the 'Jacks' had begun in London as early 23 April 1715. George I's birthday celebrations on 28 May saw more rioting, during which windows illuminated to mark the event were smashed, and the bell ropes being cut in one church to stop the ringing of the celebratory peal. It can be no surprise that the Royal family's attendance at the theatre fell away during this period. In an entry for 31 October 1715, Colman tells us that

ye King & Court not liking to go into Such Crowds these trouble Some times. but it is hoped that in a Short time the rebels will be Confounded.<sup>6</sup>

Confounded they were, for the rebels lost a major battle at Preston on 13 November. Although street fights between the 'Jacks' and the loyalists became a common occurrence in London - these did not cease until after the execution of five of the Jacks after the attack on Read's Mug-house near Fleet Street in July 1716 - Colman was able to note on 1 February that year:

The Rebellion in England being quelled by Taking ye Lords & others Prisoner at Preston & that in Scotland much kept under.<sup>7</sup>

Like *Europe's Revels*, the two occasional masques from the 1720s also have spoken dialogue, but the songs are dispersed throughout the text and do not form opening and closing musical sequences. The introductions to the libretti amount in each case to an apologia for the revival of the form, and each has the appearance of an almost desperate attempt to give the works some semblance of respectability. As one of them states:

Many doubtless will wonder at the reviving of a sort of poetry that has been so long out of date, and which so few, of late days, have wrote.<sup>8</sup>

The first piece was Allan Ramsay's *The Nuptials*, written for the marriage of James, Duke of Hamilton and Brandon, and Lady Anne Cochrane on 14 January 1723. The second was the already mentioned exercise, *Albion or the Court of Neptune*, which, although it is of an occasional nature in that it glorifies the monarch, seems not to be associated with a special event.

Both the introductions to *The Nuptials* and *Albion* claim ancient Greece as the origin of the genre:

The original of Masque seems to be an imitation of the interludes of the ancients, presented on occasion of some ceremony performed in a great and noble family<sup>9</sup>

claimed the author of the introduction to *The Nuptials*, while Cooke's slightly more colourful version suggested that 'Thespis was the inventor of them both'.<sup>10</sup> They both attempt to claim a royal connection or an association with great families for

The actors in this kind of half-dramatic poetry have formerly been even kings, princes, and the first personages of the kingdom, and in private families, the noblest and newest branches.<sup>11</sup>

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while

The noblest Families in England have assisted in the performance; even Princes have thought it no disgrace to have the greatest share in the representation.<sup>12</sup>

Ultimately Milton's *Masque at Ludlow Castle* is acknowledged as the height of masque writing, while the works of Ben Jonson are cited as entertainments. However, the occasional nature of the *The Nuptials* is acknowledged by the remark that

Coronations, princely nuptials, public feasts, the entertainments of foreign quality were the usual occasions of this performance...<sup>13</sup>

thereby complimenting the Hamilton family. The literary pretensions of *Albion* emerge in the glorification of the form:

That this kind of poetry was held in the highest esteem among some of our celebrated Poets, and profound judges, in former Ages, is too well known to need many proofs.<sup>14</sup>

and in the acknowledgement not only of the works of Milton and Jonson, but of Congreve's *Judgment of Paris*.

While there is no direct evidence to suggest that Cooke also wrote the Preface to *The Nuptials*, the sentiments in it are similar to those of *Albion*, and I would suggest that Cooke was the author of them both. The comment appended to the Scottish edition of the text suggests that another author with an interest specifically in the masque was involved:

An unknown ingenious friend did me the honour of the following Introduction to the London edition of this Masque; and being a poet, my vanity will be pardoned for inserting it here.<sup>15</sup>

Both prefaces date from the period during which Cooke was undertaking a variety of miscellaneous literary tasks in an attempt

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to establish himself on the London literary scene, and *Albion* appears to have been written to demonstrate his classical knowledge, rather than to contribute to the masque canon.

It is not clear whether *The Nuptials* was actually presented, or even set. Both the autograph and the printed sources state that it was, but a letter from Ramsay in the Hamilton papers at Lennoxlove, in presenting to the Duke of Hamilton a copy of the masque that the poet had written to celebrate the occasion, gives the impression of an author looking for patronage.<sup>16</sup> There is no hard evidence that the libretto was set, nor do any household accounts or bills indicate a performance of the work.<sup>17</sup>

The action or events of the masque takes place at an Arcadian wedding, to which the Genius of the Hamilton family,

clad in a scarlet robe, with a duke's coronet on his head, a shield on his left arm, with the proper bearing of Hamilton<sup>18</sup>

has invited the three gods Venus, Hymen and Minerva to bestow their respective virtues on the couple. The arrival of Bacchus to propose the toast, also leads to the dancing which closes the masque.

It is possible that the couple had the masque presented to them in the manner of a Court, and that they joined in the dancing, for we find the instruction

The health about, music and dancing begin. - The dancing over, before her Grace retires with the ladies to be

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undressed...<sup>19</sup>

at the end of the piece.

The work has some odd echoes of Milton's *Comus*. The appearance of the figure of Ganymede 'With a flagon in one hand, and a glass in the other' is not unlike *Comus*'s first entry, while the final dance in *The Nuptials* is followed by an epithalamium which occupies a position in the masque akin to the Spirit's Epilogue. The Spirit opens and closes *Comus*, while Calliope undertakes the same tasks in Ramsay's piece. It would be misleading to suggest, however, that the resemblance of the two works is any greater than would be expected from the use of typical masquing devices such as drunken disorder.

*Albion or the Court of Neptune* owes more to Jonson than to either Milton or Congreve, whom Cooke probably cited for the sake of their popularity and prestige. His model was probably Jonson's masque at Court for Twelfth Night in 1624, a piece entitled *Neptune's Triumph for the return of Albion*, which contains anti-Spanish sentiments and presented Charles I as Albion. The essence of Cooke's masque is that Britain, supported by the greatness of William III, has been chosen to head a new golden age:

A Land distinguish'd from the grosser Earth,  
Shall give the Golden Age a second Birth;  
A land distinguish'd in the Rolls of Fame,  
That from its happy Clime derives its Name.<sup>20</sup>

Since the 'brooding' days have arrived, Jove's court shall now move to Albion. Venus, we are told, has already left her Paphian groves;

Cooper's-Hill, rather than Parnassus, is now divine; and Kensington Palace and Hampton Court have replaced Mount Ida and Tempe's Field. The masque has opened in Neptune's Court; it closes there, with the sea god and his supporters, to whom 'Troy's Remains alone were true', but who now change their allegiance to Britannia. The libretto seems to require little music - 2 songs and a chorus towards the end are indicated - all of which is used to herald the arrival of Jupiter.

The wider influence of these later two masques was negligible. Although *The Nuptials* reached the public almost immediately with its publication in Edinburgh in 1723, it was never performed there publicly; *Albion* seems never to have been set.

The remaining occasional masque to be presented before 1733 is that which was performed at Kew Gardens on 22 October 1730:

Yesterday being the Anniversary of the Princess Royal's Birthday, a Masque was prepared at His Royal Highness's Command, on that Occasion, by Mr. Rich, and perform'd by his Company in His Royal Highness's Garden's at Cue [sic], which were illuminated with above a thousand Lamps'.<sup>21</sup>

No further record of this piece can be traced, but as Christopher Rich was involved, it is tempting to conclude that it was a pantomime masque, although probably with a simplified staging.

These four masques, then, are the only occasional works to be written after 1690 or, indeed, after the beginning of the Commonwealth, and cannot be said to constitute a tradition.

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Clearly, the masque was no longer a form to which composers and authors automatically turned when they wished to honour the Royal family; the only time they did so was with the 1697 *Europe's Revels on the Peace*. Yet in 1733, when the announcement was made that a member of the Royal family was to be married – and a minor member of the family at that – the masque was the vehicle of homage chosen on no less than six occasions by the London theatres.

#### Thomas Lediard and *Britannia*

The seeds for this dramatic resurgence in the popularity of the form were sown during the previous season by Thomas Arne senior, in the series of English operas at the Little Theatre in the Haymarket. The background to Arne's activities was, of course, Handel and the Opera of the Nobility, both troubled by operatic jealousies, problems of patronage and the need to attract, support and retain expensive Italian singers as draw cards for their performances. For a view of English opera at this point, we can turn again to Thomas Cooke, who in the early 1730s, was still able to long for a competent setting of English libretti:

If *English Operas*, well wrote and set to as excellent music as most of the *Italian Operas* have been for some Years passed, [sic] were well performed on our Stages, the good Effects on the Audience would be many, and the Profits not few to the management of our theatres.<sup>22</sup>

Thomas Arne senior, Lampe and Carey clearly thought that there might be commercial as well as artistic benefits to be gained from an English opera season. Four works were performed at the Little Theatre in the Haymarket – these are listed in Table II vi 2. Fiske

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includes in this series *Acis and Galatea* (LT 17 v 32), which, although not newly set in the 'Italian Manner', has a claim to a place in the season as an all-sung main piece in English.<sup>23</sup> As Table II vi 3 shows, there were also three pieces offered at the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields. Unfortunately, very little music belonging to the operas survives; what does is detailed by Fiske.<sup>24</sup> Among its interesting features is the use of *da capo* forms in *Ulysses*, a use which is perhaps not unexpected after its predominance in the English masques 'after the Italian manner' of 1715 and 1716.

The plots of these operas do not seem to have developed a coherent style of their own: *Teraminta* and *Dione* have pastoral plots, while those of *Amelia*, *Ulysses* and *Rosamond* have historical leanings; all involve intricacies similar to those of Italian opera. Their exotic settings - *Teraminta*, for example, is set in Cuba - perhaps compensated for the almost total lack of story line.

It is the opera *Britannia* which is of interest here. Although set by Johann Frederick Lampe, *Britannia* was clearly masterminded by the author Thomas Lediard (1684-1743). Little is known about Lediard's background and education, but he makes reference in his introduction to a book of stage designs to an early training in architecture which undoubtedly influenced his work.<sup>25</sup> His career was mainly a diplomatic one, and after visits to Saxony and other missions, he became secretary to Cyril Wych, the British envoy extraordinary in Hamburg.<sup>26</sup> Lediard seems to have begun work in the

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Hamburg opera house in the Goosemarket in 1722, when the theatre first came under the control of Wych and a group of other gentleman and ministers in the 1720s. His first known stage design is for the *Serenade* written for the birthday of George I in 1724, and in the years that followed, he designed several occasional works; 1727, for example, saw a production of *Julius Caesar in Egypt* for the birthday of George I and was followed by *Great Britain Rejoicing* for the accession of George II. His set designs commonly included statuary, mottoes, coats of arms, symbols, triumphal arches and emblematic pictures.<sup>27</sup>

*Britannia* was first performed on 16 September 1733 at the Little Theatre. The announcement leaves no doubt that Lediard was continuing to work in the same style:

The Scenes and Cloaths are entirely New. With the Representation of a Transparent Theatre. Curiously Illuminated, and adorn'd with a great Number of Emblems, Mottos, Devices, and Inscriptions; and embellish'd with Machines, in a Manner entirely new.<sup>28</sup>

The publication of an elaborate and costly libretto of *Britannia* has meant that a more accurate picture of the opera survives than is usual. Printed for John Watts, the libretto includes a folding frontispiece illustrating Lediard's design for what is described in the text as his 'transparent' theatre (see Illustration 1). To complement this, there is also a 'Prefatory Argument' and a detailed explanation of the mottoes and devices used on the set. As in *The Nuptials* and *Albion*, historical models are cited as the authority for aspects of the drama:

This sort of Theatres has a double Use; for at the same Time that they delight the Eye, the Emblems, Devices

and Inscriptions, which are mostly borrow'd from the Ancients, not only...direct, but instruct the Mind.<sup>29</sup>

The scene that met the eyes of the audience must have been a curious one. The stage was designed to represent the Temple of Honour, decorated to celebrate the glory of Britannia and her august monarch. On the left of the temple sat Honour, a hero in a Roman habit crowned with laurel and a gold chain around his neck. On the right was Public Virtue, personified by a beautiful nymph, having in her right hand a spear, and in her left, a garland of laurel. They both symbolised the populace. In the top corners, statues of Bellona, Mercury, Apollo and Minerva represented arms, trade, learning and arts; these were an allusion to the flourishing state of the country. Over the centre, the arms of Britain were held by Safety on the left, and Plenty on the right. The busts on either side were of Prudence, Temperance, Justice and Fortitude. Scattered around the ceiling were eight lions, each with a motto characterising the British people. The second vignette down on the left of the central coat of arms, for example, carried Jupiter's thunderbolts, and had the motto 'Death to others, to me Glory' - an appropriately British sentiment. The double row of three-quarter portraits were of Roman Emperors of whom some heroic deed was known or assumed, while the suns had mottoes, which described the happy state of the nation. The equestrian statue in the garb of a Roman Emperor was George II; at the foot of this, barely distinguishable, were the corpses of Envy and Tyranny. Grouped around him were the figures of Victory, Valour, Peace and Mars,

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with Britannia in the centre. The hovering figure with the trumpet was Fame, about to place a crown of laurel on the monarch's head.

It comes as no surprise to be told that:

The Illustrations and other Properties for this Opera are such that no Person whatever can be admitted to the Stage. <sup>30</sup>

One assumes that the audience had some time to interpret these numerous allegorical images. Even with Lediard's commentary and the fold out diagram published as a frontispiece to the libretto, it is a difficult task; it cannot have helped the audience to discover that the commentary and the diagram did not agree. There seem to be only six out of the eight lion vignettes, and only twenty suns with mottoes. In any case, it is doubtful that most of the audience would have had the necessary skills to understand many of the minor references to British supremacy, and of those that did, a great many were probably gossiping or waving to friends, and would not have bothered to interpret them.

There is no indication in the text to show exactly which parts of the set are three-dimensional and which parts belong to the drop, although the opening stage direction suggests that the arches and pedestals at least are flats:

THE Stage represents the *Temple of Honour*, illuminated and embellish'd by that Deity, as before described; with the Entrance into it, thro' the *Temple of Virtue*, represented by a noble Triumphal Arch.

After the Overture, the Curtain, rising by slow Degrees, during a joyful Musick, accompany'd with Trumpets and Kettle-drums; discovers seated under this Arch, on two elevated Thrones,

PUBLICK VIRTUE and HONOUR.

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In the middle, on a Throne, at the Foot of the Pedestal  
of HIS MAJESTY'S equestrian Statue, is seated

BRITANNIA

and on each side of her,

VICTORY AND VALOUR<sup>31</sup>

Since Britannia, Victory and Valour '*advance to the Front of the Stage and 'HONOUR and PUBLICK VIRTUE descend from their Thrones'* - the latter two singers seem to be sitting under, or just beyond the proscenium arch - these are clearly characters, rather than the statues implied by the illustration. It is probable that the rest of the set remains *in situ* throughout the opera, and that it frames the various clouds that descend and the chariots that rise. The stage must have seemed fairly poky and cramped. Lediard himself tells us that

his only Design is to offer a small Specimen of what hath been receiv'd with Applause in some foreign Countries, the narrow limits of this stage having confin'd him to a very small Part of what he has done on larger Theatres...<sup>32</sup>

Parts of the set were translucent, and were lit from behind. These are referred to in Lediard's commentaries and in other contemporary sources, as being 'transparent'.<sup>33</sup> Sybil Rosenfeld, in *Georgian Scene Painting and Scene Painters*, details transparent scenery in use in English theatrical productions as early as Ben Jonson's masque of *Oberon*, so although Lediard's high baroque design was new to London audiences, there does not appear to have been anything particularly innovative about this method of illumination.<sup>34</sup>

There is minimal action. Britannia is celebrating in a temple dedicated to her glory and to her sovereign. Among the guests are Publick Virtue, Liberty, Concord, Valour and Victory; Phoebus, who

is also present, is there to 'give lustre to the Feast'. Discord is furious at Britain's prosperous state, and she instructs Faction to excite Mars to war. By disguising themselves as Flattery and Fear, Discord and Faction prevail upon Britannia to agree go to war, assisted by Mars and Neptune. Concord unmask the villains, who are condemned to be chained to the front of Britannia's throne. The festival with which the opera opens is renewed, and it concludes with the approbation of Jupiter and the other Gods.

The Prefatory Argument emphasises that this style of drama was new to English audiences:

With Regard to the Transparent Theatre, embellish'd in the Manner hereafter describ'd, tho' the like has been little known on the *British* Stage, it has been common abroad, on occasion of solemn Festivals, as this is feign'd to be...<sup>35</sup>

The real influence on the public taste of *Britannia* and the English Opera season is difficult to judge. The works were short lived; *Britannia* had only four performances at the Little Theatre, which, given the nature of the libretto, is not perhaps surprising. Their mark on the next season, however, was dramatic. When the marriage of Anne, the Princess Royal was announced, the masque suddenly re-emerged as a public theatrical entertainment in a form which resembled Lediard's opera, and, as had the English Opera season, involved the Arne family, Lampe and Carey.

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### The Wedding Masques of 1733-4

Anne, the Princess Royal, the eldest daughter of George II and Queen Caroline was, by all accounts, determined to marry, and into a position of distinction which would give her dynastic status.<sup>36</sup> The marriage to William the Prince of Orange was scheduled for 23 November, but the bridegroom, who had only recently arrived in Britain, fell ill, and the marriage was postponed. Since the theatres had chosen the dates of their wedding offerings with some care, confusion reigned, resulting in the early appearance of entertainments at the theatre in Goodman's Fields and the Little Theatre in the Haymarket (then occupied by the Drury Lane Company), and by the presentation in February of Goodman's Fields's second offering, *Britannia, or the Royal Lovers*.<sup>37</sup> Table II vi 4 shows not only the masques that were written for this event, but the other entertainments staged by the theatres, including Handel's serenata, *Parnasso in Festa*. It also shows that Royal attendances at the entertainments was poor. Most of family - the Prince of Wales, the Princess Royal, the Prince of Orange and others - attended the first performance of *Parnasso in Festa*,<sup>38</sup> but the only other visit was that by the Prince of Wales to Galliard's benefit performance of his *The Nuptial Masque* in April.<sup>39</sup> The abundance of entertainments at Goodman's Fields was indicative of the style of its manager Henry Giffard, who had been offering similar attractions, fringe benefits and publicity stunts at every occasion

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that was even approximately suitable, to attract the audiences to his otherwise out of the way theatre.<sup>40</sup>

In all, the wedding inspired seven masques - these are listed in Table II vi 5. Six were performed at the London theatres, and one, published in 1740, was probably not set and not performed.

The style of these new occasional masques did not differ greatly from *Europe's Revels*, *The Nuptials* and *Albion and Britannia*, but the prefaces ceased to appeal to historical models to justify their cause, indicating that their authors felt that the form now had an identity of its own in the eighteenth century. Their popularity can perhaps be attributed to the fact that they were nearly all afterpieces (there were few attempts to produce a full length occasional work), and their appeal lay in the desire of both the public and theatres to honour the Royal family. This style was not to succeed as an independent genre and indeed, it was not to be expected that it could.

The first masque, *The Happy Nuptials*, with words and music by Henry Carey, was already in performance when the wedding was initially deferred. Its premiere was at the theatre in Goodman's Fields on 12 November 1733, the libretto being published in *The Gentleman's Magazine* for that month.<sup>41</sup> The masque tells of Geron, who is puzzled at the confusion among the nymphs and swains, and at the abandonment with which they 'frolick in excess'. Daphne fills in the plot: they are celebrating the arrival on Britain's shores of a

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royal stranger. When Geron complains that Daphne gives him no name, she tells him that the stranger is William, from the mighty Nassauvian line. Geron's soul is renovated 'with youthful fire', for the name Nassau inspires respect. Anna's charms are the reason for his journey, and the union is so perfect that even 'nature's self looks gay', and 'winter becomes another spring'. The crowds dance a 'sicilien' in celebration.<sup>42</sup>

Music is used only as a finale. Daphne announces Lycidas who, assisted by the chorus 'with exulting voice', celebrates their union. The music required by the libretto is listed in Table II vi 6, and survives in *The Musical Miscellany* of 1733. The collection also gives the song 'Cupid God of gay desires', the words of which are not included in the libretto; this suggests that the published text is not complete.<sup>43</sup>

Central to the masque is the theme of rebirth. Geron is listless and unenthusiastic, and it is the announcement that a member of the house of Nassau is to arrive in the country that gives him motivation. The unfortunate implication in this, of course, is that Geron does not receive this from the House of Hanover, but one hopes that this might have been overlooked.

*The Festival, or The Impromptu Revels Masque*, was the second offering by the London playhouses. The intention of the Little Theatre in the Haymarket to stage a masque in honour of the approaching royal nuptials was announced on 9 November 1733.<sup>44</sup>

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Originally thought to be entirely lost,<sup>45</sup> the music and text of three songs, originally published in 1733 in *The Miscellany* were located in the holdings of the National Library of Scotland by the present writer,<sup>46</sup> who, in 1989, also discovered the libretto in the Bodleian Library in Oxford.<sup>47</sup> This discovery made possible the identification of three more pieces of music, and has confirmed ideas which have previously been expressed concerning the construction of the masque and the nature of its plot.<sup>48</sup>

The libretto gives no *dramatis personae* or cast list, but contemporary newspaper accounts report that Miss Arne sang the part of Venus, Master Arne, Cupid and that the Shepherds and Shepherdesses were played by Kelly, Berry and Corse, and Miss Jones, Mrs Pritchard, Mrs Clark and Miss Oates.<sup>49</sup> These accounts also include what became rapidly an almost obligatory phrase for the first performance of a masque: 'The Scenes, Machines, and Habits entirely new'.<sup>50</sup> There was also a new Prologue to the Masque, one we can assume was in praise of the royal event.

The libretto, the structure of which is illustrated in Table II vi 7, is headed:

AN/IMPROMPTU REVEL MASQUE, /CALL'D/ The FESTIVAL. /Perform'd by the Company of Comedians of his Majesty's Revels, /at the New Theatre in the Hay-Market. /Made on the joyous occasion of the approaching Royal Nuptials. / (r)<sup>51</sup>

Few of the earlier masque conventions can be discerned in the piece, although it could, perhaps, be argued that the opening sequence 'discovers' the scene of the masque, which then takes

place at the Queen's House at Richmond. There is no text between these songs, the plot being expressed solely in the words of the musical pieces; there is no indication in the title that there was recitative or spoken dialogue. The original suggestion as to the plot of the masque has proved to be correct; there is indeed an allegorical representation of the wedding.<sup>52</sup> However, the libretto gives us the *deus ex machina*, the scene changes and the dances, all of which were necessarily absent from such speculation.

The masque opens with the arrival of Venus, who sings of her departure from her Paphian dwelling. Her aim is to reach Britain which of all isles excels, where she will 'own her power and Cupid's reign'. She summons Cupid to 'behold the happiest lover, with the fairest bride unite'; he, who is greater than Mars, and she, who is more beautiful than Cupid's mother. Cupid sings of the happy scenes they will encounter, and how each couple (the nymphs and swains of the next air presumably) improve the already blissful scene; he then hails the wedding day. Venus sings of the enthusiasm with which the nymphs and swains will hail 'a hero and a beauty', and the scene changes to the Royal Hermitage in Queen Charlotte's garden at Richmond. Cupid and Venus summon all the happy couples, calling on them to obey the voices of love. While there are no stage instructions relating to the Royal train, the following chorus sings 'Behold the Train advancing' and it seems probable that a procession took place here. The powers of both Venus and Cupid are considered by a shepherd and shepherdess, and probably expressed by the dance which follows. The last three pieces reflect

on the sentiments expressed by the masque as a whole. Firstly, to the air 'Tweedside', Venus sings initially on the beauty of the isle, and then on the new delights which will result in the happy vision, under the protection of the wings of liberty now ensured by this Royal marriage. Secondly, the shepherd and shepherdess sing a duet on the happiness of lovers. Lastly, there is a grand chorus, in which the Genius of Britain, the new Royal pair, the general safety of the Royal family and the increased wealth of the nation under the rule of George II are respectively the subjects of the four verses.

The libretto does not refer to an overture, and it can be supposed that 'Venus descends in her Chariot' to a statement of the music to the first air. The music to Airs I and II has already been mentioned above, as has Air V. Air III is, sadly, headed simply 'Minuet', and no music intended specially for this can be traced. A possible source for Air IV is headed 'Come all ye lads, &c', and survives only in the Kidson Collection in the Mitchell Library in Glasgow.<sup>53</sup> It is bound in a volume of song sheets from the first part of the eighteenth century, and includes songs by Carey and others. It seems likely that the chorus reuses the music of 'Come all ye lads' for the following chorus, 'Behold a train advancing'. Air VI, called 'Tweedside', is an old one and survives in numerous sources. The original text was by R. Crawford, and the tune with his words was printed frequently from about 1725.<sup>54</sup> The air 'De'el take the war' is one of the two songs which are the only surviving fragments of Thomas D'Urfey's play *A Wife for Any Man*. The original

song sheet was published in 1699.<sup>55</sup> The play is only known from this and one other song sheet, and is assumed to have been first performed in 1695-6 season. The song sheet gives the performer as Mrs Cross, the author as D'Urfey, and the composer as Charles Powell. The same tune appeared anonymously in *Wit and Mirth: Pills to Purge Melancholy*. That Powell's tune is also used in *The Cobbler's Opera* (1729), *The Lover's Opera* (1729) and *The Beggar's Wedding* (1729) attests to the popularity of the piece, and its currency in the late 1720s. The song also had patriotic associations. Cyrus L. Day points out that the original text (which was that used in the above works) contains allusions to William III's campaigns on the continent, and was probably written before the signing of the treaty of Ryswick in 1697.<sup>56</sup> Powell's tune should not be confused with Jeremiah Clarke's setting of the incidental music for the same play written between 1704 and 1707.

The libretto has shown that my earlier tentative inclusion of the '...SONG set to the PRINCE of ORANGE'S Minuet/By Mr W<sup>m</sup> BARTON' among the surviving music of *The Festival* was incorrect; the piece remains simply a patriotic song for the occasion.<sup>57</sup>

There appears to be no music for any of the three dances which occur between numbers V, VI, and VII, nor is any suggested for the final chorus. However, the fact that this last remains unnumbered suggests that it, too, may have been sung to the music of the preceding air. In this case, 'De'el take the War' would be the tune used.

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I have already disputed the attribution of the music of the masque to Carey, firstly because 'Sweet Linnets on every spray' was set by Mr Charke, secondly because the advertisement quoted by the *London Stage* is ambiguous, and thirdly, although much of the music in *The British Musical Miscellany* is carefully headed 'Set by Mr Carey', the masque songs are not.<sup>59</sup> The libretto reveals *The Festival* to have been a pastiche score, and the inclusion of the songs in Carey's volumes points to him as the probable author of the new texts, rather than as the overall adapter of the music and the composer of the few pieces likely to have been needed.

One likely candidate for the compiler of the score, who has not previously been connected with it, is Thomas Arne junior. The connection between the Arne family, the Haymarket theatre and the English opera season has been outlined above, and it was in this season that Susanna Arne performed in Handel's masque *Acis and Galatea*. Further, the newspaper advertisement for the masque, states that the Haymarket 'intends to perform a new masque, *Love and Glory* in honour of the approaching Royal Nuptials, but the time being short, the theatre will first bring on an *Impromptu Revel Masque*'.<sup>60</sup> In other words, Thomas Arne ran up something quickly for the theatre, while he and Thomas Phillips prepared their more considered response. By this time, the Company was at Drury Lane, and the management was able to perform the later work nearer the date the ceremony finally took place. Also suggestive is the fact that the masque had two principal characters, Venus and Cupid, who

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were sung by Thomas Arne junior's sister Susanna and his brother Richard respectively.

The next masque to be presented, *Britannia or the Royal Lovers*, seems to have been the most extravagant of all. Again given as an afterpiece, the work was announced as 'A new Entertainment' for which:

The House will be adorned with the Portraits of the Royal Family, and his Highness the Prince of Orange; and a new Ceiling-piece of Apollo and the Muses. The Cloaths, Scenes, Machines, and other Decorations entirely new.<sup>60</sup>

Later in the season, this patriotic work was performed for his Excellency Sidi Mahomet Chinsani, Ambassador from the Regency of Tunis<sup>61</sup> and for the entertainment of Tomo Chachi, King of the Indians, and Senarki his Queen, and John Tooamahowi.<sup>62</sup> Sadly, no record of their views on the entertainment seems to have survived.

*Britannia* was Goodman's Fields's second offering to the Royal couple, and again failed to come even within a month of the wedding. First performed on 11 February 1734 as an afterpiece to George Farquhar's *The Constant Couple*, the *London Stage* claims that the author is unknown, but it is clear that the words and music were by Henry Carey.<sup>63</sup> The surviving songs are contained in two collections - two in *The Musical Miscellany*<sup>64</sup> and seven in *The Musical Century*<sup>65</sup> - and all are attributed to him. His involvement in the theatre, taken in conjunction with the staging of this second work, has given rise to speculation that *Britannia* was a version of *The Happy Nuptials*.<sup>66</sup> However, none of the surviving

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music is common to both, and the respective dramatis personae listed in Table II vi 8 show that even if *The Happy Nuptials* was 'revised', it was altered so extensively, as to justify it being considered a new work.<sup>57</sup>

As with *The Happy Nuptials* and *The Festival*, a group of scattered songs survive. Henry Carey's volume *The Musical Century* contains the greater number of these, having three songs and four duets.<sup>58</sup> The earlier *The Musical Miscellany* contains one more - 'Noble stranger I approve thee', and a different version of 'Fair Britannia' entitled 'Beauteous charmer'. Table II vi 9 gives a probable allocation of the surviving music to the characters in the drama, while Table II vi 10 suggests the order in which the songs might have appeared. A possible scenario based on these two tables is outlined below. Unlike some of the other masques, such as *Britannia and Batavia*, the central figures of the work are an allegory of the Royal couple, as well as the countries. Britannia clearly represents both Britain and the Princess Royal. Prince Germanicus, representing Holland and the Prince, probably takes his name from the Roman for the area from the East of the Rhine through to the Elbe; it was the name bestowed on those of high office who has performed 'great deeds' in Germania.

As in the case of *The Happy Nuptials*, enough of the music and the text remain to construct a possible synopsis of *Britannia*. The first song, the duet 'He comes, the hero comes', was possibly sung by the 1st nymph and the 1st swain, when the parts were taken in



the first performance by Ann Bullock and John Thurmond. Although it was only Bullock's second season at Goodman's Fields, she had already sung the nymph to Thurmond's title role in the masque *The Amorous Sportsman* in 1732.<sup>69</sup> The duet deals with the Prince's arrival, and calls on all to welcome him. A glimpse is given of the Prince's character: 'Virtue is with glory crowned'. The Prince appears before the nymphs, who fete him with 'Welcome to Britain, Godlike youth'. The text of the song includes the hope that the Prince's patience will be rewarded, and a mention of the benefits the Gods have given the union:

Welcome to Britain, Godlike youth  
May every joy attend thee  
The Royal Fair reward thy truth  
and all the Gods befriend thee

Neptune has safely brought thee o'er  
See Venus haste to meet thee;  
While Gladsome crouds [sic] from Albion's shor [sic]  
With loud Applauses greet thee.<sup>70</sup>

The Prince encounters the fair Britannia and sings of his love:

Beauteous Charmer, Pride of Nature,  
Idol goddess of my Heart;  
Soul of Beauty, Heav'n-born Creature,  
Ease a tender Lover's smart.

How I doat, and languish,  
Witness all the Gods above,  
Nothing can assuage my anguish,  
But a smile from her I love.<sup>71</sup>

Britannia responds in kind with 'Noble stranger, I approve thee'.

Her sentiments are slightly different in that they show great condescension from the superior nation accepting a slightly advantageous offer from a smaller one. They both then sing the joyful duet 'Transporting sight'. *The Prince of Orange's March* appears to follow next, as the Serjeant at Arms (Mr Hulett), calls

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his men to prepare their martial sports to celebrate Britannia's choice. The song of celebration and heavenly approval, 'Illustrious Pair by heav'n design'd', was probably sung by Cupid, the only named character without an air. The text makes it clear that it was sung by a heavenly body:

Ilustrious pair, by Heav'n design'd,  
the Pride and Pleasure of Mankind.  
Nature your Virtues does approve,  
and bids the lifeless statues move.  
See they seem to breath and live,  
and to your loves their plaudits give.<sup>72</sup>

The 'lifeless statues' referred to in the text are probably those of the three Deities - played by Vallois, Delagradie and Sandham - and the three Graces - Miss Wetherilt, Miss Sandham and Mrs Vallois - who would appear to have been on stage during the rest of the action.<sup>73</sup> They are also the most appropriate characters to be giving their 'plaudit' to Germanicus and Britannia. The second verse calls the nymphs and swains to a celebration; the text here also implies that some dance music is missing. The last piece 'Nature bids the world rejoice' appears to be a reduced version of a Grand Chorus. Normally, the last song - and in particular the last verse - would be reserved for patriotic sentiments such as the joining together of two states, but in *Britannia* the last verse deals with their love:

Fill the air with Odours sweet,  
Scatter Roses at their feet.  
Mirth in all its Pomp display,  
Celebrate this happy day  
Oh may ev'ry dear delight  
Still more happy make the night<sup>74</sup>

The performances listed in the *London Stage* show how popular the work was,<sup>75</sup> as do the number of Benefits and request performances.

This, due no doubt in part to the rousing tunes, was commented upon by *The Daily Advertiser*, which remarked that:

the new Entertainment at Goodman's-fields continues to meet with universal Approbation; 'twas computed that above 300 Persons of all Ranks were oblig'd to return last Night for want of room: the Play was bespoke by several Ladies of Quality, who express'd the utmost satisfaction at the whole Performance.<sup>77</sup>

Despite performing the work too early however, Goodman's Fields managed to stage a performance on the day the wedding took place.

on Thursday Night Mr Giffard ordered 12 triumphal Arches to be erected before the House, which were finely illuminated, a large bonfire to be made, Fireworks to be play'd off, and plenty of Drink given to the Populace.<sup>78</sup>

Unfortunately for Giffard and Goodman's Fields, the Royal party was attending the performance of Handel's *Parnasso in Festa* at the King's Theatre in the Haymarket. However, on 15 March, Giffard gave a ball at the theatre and

invited the whole Company to a very grand Entertainment, prepar'd for 'em in the Playhouse, where their Majesties, his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, the Prince and Princess of Orange, the Royal family, Success to Trade, Prosperity to the City of London, and many other loyal Healths were drunk; during which time the Arches were again illuminated, Fireworks play'd off, and the Night concluded with a Ball.<sup>79</sup>

The work did not immediately disappear from the repertoire, and was played as late as 9 May 1735. It is to one of the later revivals, that the plates used for the songs in *The Musical Century* belong. The attributions in published versions include Miss Jones for Prince Germanicus, Miss Chambers for Britannia, and Master Hamilton for Cupid; this can be compared to the original cast, listed in Table II vi 9. This was the cast for the revival of the masque in September of the 1734-5 season,<sup>80</sup> with the exception of Cupid, who

was played on all subsequent occasions by Miss Roberts - I have traced no performance given by Master Hamilton. The original Cupid, Miss Cole, was only five years old at the time, having made her debut in *Virtue Betray'd* the previous season.<sup>81</sup> The role was obviously intended for a treble voice, for Master Hamilton was one of the Masters Hamilton, William and James, who were the young children of Mrs Sarah Hamilton the actress, who took the part of Columbine in the September revival when the pantomime *Harlequin in the City* was included.

The revival saw some alterations to *Britannia*. The pantomime mentioned above, with music by Seedo, was added for all subsequent performances, and was probably the reason for the masque's continued popularity. Other alterations may have been made to the masque itself: for the performance given on 18 November, a new character of Victory, sung by Woodward, is announced in the advertisement and was still included when the work was revived again towards the end of the 1734-5 season.<sup>82</sup> Mr Hulett was the only character to sing the same role for all the performances.

The wedding actually took place on 14 March 1734 with due pomp and ceremony and, unlike Goodman's Fields, the two Theatres Royal managed to time their masques a little more happily. Covent Garden's *The Nuptial Masque* was played for the first time on 16 March, two days after the wedding. Unfortunately, nothing of this masque survives. The published cast includes the characters of Hymen, Venus, Cupid, Britannia, and Liberty, with a chorus of the

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priests of Hymen and bridal nymphs and swains.<sup>83</sup> There are also the characters of a bridal virgin, Un Amour and two deities of pleasure. The plot is clearly similar to those of the other masques, with Liberty representing the preservation of the country's continuing freedom under the new alliance. However, the inclusion of the Priests of Hymen, Liberty, the Bridal virgin and Un Amour suggests that the scenario was more fanciful and ritualistic than, say, *Britannia*. Like the other wedding masques, the work was advertised as having 'new Cloaths, Scenes, and other Decorations'.<sup>84</sup> It had six performances, four of them being given in the Benefit season.

The last masque staged, *Love and Glory*, was the work originally promised in the advertisements for the first performance of *The Festival* by the Drury Lane Company in 1733, when it was still at the Little Theatre in the Haymarket.<sup>85</sup> The work was first given on 21 March, and performed as a serenata:

A new Serenata, Compos'd on the present Joyous Occasion  
of the Royal Nuptials. The Words by Mr Tho. Phillips. The  
Musick by Mr. Arne.<sup>86</sup>

It only received two performances; the second was on 28 March at Miss Arne's Benefit, the topicality being well past, and the style of the work comparatively pretentious. An attempt was made to retrieve the work by altering it to a masque:

A new Masque. Alter'd from the Serenata made on the  
Joyous Occasion of the Royal Nuptials: With Additions.<sup>87</sup>

It is in this form that the work survives today.

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*Love and Glory* was probably the most polished of all the masques. Apart from the preparation time - the first advertisement appeared as early as 9 November the previous year - the calibre of both Phillips and Arne ensured that the result was of some quality. Unfortunately, only the libretto survives. The characters are Britannia, Venus, Pallas, Mercury and Mars. The first scene opens in a

Grove, adorn'd with Statues and Fountains. At the upper  
End of the Scene Britannia repos'd in a Bower. Shepherds  
and Shepherdesses rang'd on each Side of the Stage.<sup>28</sup>

Britannia is at ease because George II and his consort Caroline carry the burden of state. Scene ii sees the descent of Mercury, who comes from the 'all-ruling Pow'rs' to inform Britannia that they intend to grant the rulers a son. Venus and Pallas

*descend in two Machines from different Sides of the  
Stage; they alight, and approach Britannia.*<sup>29</sup>

They have come to defend Britannia's beauties and her glories. Reference is made to the group of future Queens and Heroes, the children of Caroline, all of whom would be capable of running the country in time of adversity. Anna (Anne, the Princess Royal) is referred to as the first of the shining throng, and Venus dwells on her beauty. The deities, having persuaded Britannia that the marriage of the Princess Royal to the Prince of Orange (NASSAU) is a wise one, return her to her bower. The third scene changes to

A Rural Prospect, with Water-Falls, easy-rising Hills,  
and a clear Horizon; Shepherds and Shepherdesses in  
several Parties. \_\_\_\_\_soft Symphony<sup>30</sup>

where a shepherd sings of the delights of Arcadia. The remainder of the scene is a dialogue between a shepherd and a shepherdess, which

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consists of his attempts to persuade her that possessing a person's love enhances its delight, while she advances the view that it only causes the pleasure to expire. The final scene opens in a magnificent temple with Britannia seated on a throne:

*On her Right Hand Venus, Pallas, Cupid and the Graces: On her Left Hand, Mercury, Mars, and other warlike Attendants.* <sup>91</sup>

Mercury shows Britannia the Prince of Orange who is to have the hand of the Princess Royal. Mars praises the Prince's military background:

The Cause that made Great WILLIAM'S Story,  
Full of Wonder, full of Glory;  
Mounted him on the Wings of Fame,  
And immortalised his Name. <sup>92</sup>

Pallas, on the other hand, pledges her support for the Prince's diplomatic missions. Venus's charms, however, will be the only war that will be waged, and '*The Graces and Attendants of Mars perform a Dance*'. The Gods celebrate the happy union, and bless the marriage with the promise of children.

One of the only surviving libretti of the enigmatic work *Aurora's Nuptials* survives in the Malone Collection in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. <sup>93</sup> It is lacking its title page, thereby probably depriving us of valuable information. No cast list survives in the libretto, and I have traced no performances of this work. The first surviving page bears the heading *AURORA'S NUPTIALS. A DRAMATICK PERFORMANCE* and even the most cursory examination reveals that it, too, is a masque similar in style to those already discussed. Several sources suggest Lampe as the composer, and it has been mentioned as being

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part of the Drury Lane contribution to the festivities.<sup>94</sup> This last detail is somewhat difficult to fit into the sequence of events. The Drury Lane company at the Little Theatre in the Haymarket had already performed *The Festival or the Impromptu Revels Masque* and had announced that *Love and Glory* was in preparation - a third masque by this company is surely unlikely.

The text is divided into three parts of three, two and three scenes respectively. At the opening of Part I, Flora rises from a bank of flowers, and announces that 'our beautiful Princess' Aurora (Anne) will wed Hesperus (William). This is followed by the arrival of Venus, attended by Cupid and the Graces. Flora asks for her blessing on Aurora (this is not actually bestowed, although it is implied), and Venus praises the Princess, and suggests that the Prince will feel the yoke of marriage lightly, while Cupid sings of love. A grand procession, including the illustrious pair, moves around the stage; Venus presents Aurora with a cestus, and gives Cupid his bow and quiver. The scene closes as the whole procession of deities and graces exits. Part I ends with a pastoral dance of hunters. The opening scene of Part II is a brief representation of the marriage which closes with a dance of the Hours; the second scene changes to the Palace referred to earlier by Venus which is being constructed by Vulcan with the help of the Cyclops. This scene also closes with a dance; the Cyclops, having completed the temple, dance beating time with their hammers. The final part is largely occupied by an enormous allegorical scene in which the four seasons, portrayed as the 'alternate rulers of the year', are



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represented by four appropriate allegorical groups. The scene contains obvious motifs; Spring sings of orange blossom, Autumn of the golden fruit, the orange that 'shall prove the prop and glory' of Aurora's throne, while Summer presents laurel wreaths of victory, those wreaths which only to Aurora will be yielded. Winter has nothing to offer - but the princess will cause even Winter to smile, robbing him of 'more than half his empire'. Scene II opens dramatically with the appearance of Apollo, Mars, Bacchus and Hercules, who descend in the Chariot of the Sun. Apollo, Bacchus and Mars make offerings for the wedding feast of music, wine and peace. The final scene of the masque is announced by thunder and lightening and the appearance of Jupiter in his eagle. Hesperus and Aurora on their throne are taken by him to add a new 'lustre to the glittering sphere', and will now proceed in his chariot to announce the approaching day, a symbol of the dawning of a new age. The masque closes with a grand dance and chorus.

One of the more striking things about the libretto is the number of stage instructions which involve elaborate machinery - '*Venus descends in a large Machine, attended by Cupid and the graces.*'; '*six Cupids, which were perch'd upon the Altar during the Ceremony, fly down, and support Aurora's Train*'; '*Apollo descends in the Chariot of the Sun, accompany'd by Bacchus, Mars, Hercules, &c*'; '*Jupiter descends on his Eagle, and appears in the Air*'; '*[Here Jupiter reascends and the Throne, with Hesperus and Aurora, is carry'd up to Heaven]*' - and while many of these indicate standard theatrical machinery and customary masquing devices, it is possible

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that they represent the librettist's ideas, rather than a description of what actually took place.<sup>95</sup> The allegory has a slightly different emphasis in this work - the Princess and her consort travel before Jupiter's chariot to light the dawning of a new age, suggesting that Jupiter is the embodiment of the spirit of the Princess's brother Frederick, who in 1734, was heir presumptive to the throne.

The most interesting masque of all is one that does not appear to have been set, and was not published until 1740. The author of *Britannia and Batavia*, George Lillo (1693-1739) remains a shadowy figure. His principal success was the drama *The London Merchant* (1731), and he is credited for having been the first to write bourgeois prose tragedy in English.<sup>96</sup> There is no apparent explanation for the delay in publication of the text and the reason for its eventual appearance in libretto form remains obscure; I have traced no performances of it in that year or at any subsequent time. The publisher of the libretto was the author's close friend, John Gray, and it was to him that Lillo consigned his manuscripts on his death. It is probable that the masque text was among them, and that Gray published it in his role of literary executor, which suggests that libretto form was chosen to attract the attention of composers who might have been willing to set the work.

The divisions of the scenes, outlined in Table II vi 11, reflect the earlier anti-masque tradition. In the first scene, Britannia is asleep. Ithuriel, her protector, muses on the greatness of

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Britannia. Eliphas descends and 'stands before *Britannia* in a Posture of Defence. *Eliphas*, the Guardian Angel of *Batavia*, descends with an Olive Branch in his Hand'. Eliphas is the guardian of *Batavia*, but has been unable to protect her from the forces of Spain. *Ithuriel* refuses to wake *Britannia*, but she stirs at the arrival of *Batavia* and, when she realises *Batavia's* plight, immediately offers her protection. The Chorus of country lads and lasses, fulfilling the function of an anti-masque, reflect that while Britons were otherwise free, they are still in the chains of Love; but would not 'from them be free'. *Britannia*, left alone in the Palace, is surprised by Tyranny attended by Slavery and Want, and by Superstition attended by Cruelty and Pride. Both attempt to convert her, at first with the cup, then by force. *Britannia* pleads for mercy with the air 'Just heav'n! if ev'r the wretched's prayer'. There are 'Loud shouts without, mixt with martial Musick, cries of Liberty, &c. Scene changes to the Prospect of a calm Sea with a Fleet of Ships at Anchor. Enter *Ithuriel*, *Eliphas*, and *Batavia* ushering in *Liberty*, richly habited and attended. At whose Appearance *Tyranny* unbinds *Britannia*'. Tyranny, Supersition and their attendants are driven off by the arrival of *Ithuriel*, *Eliphas* and *Batavia*, accompanied by *Liberty* who sets *Britannia* free. *Britannia* gives to *Liberty* freedom, wealth and power. This is commented upon by the Sailors, who maintain that *Britannia's* powers and *Liberty* are preserved. To pay her debt of gratitude to *Batavia*, *Britannia* bestows the 'princely youth' with

The First-born Princess of her Royal House  
Replete with ev'ry Virtue, for his Bride 97

The masque ends with the procession and a celebration, sure in the knowledge that the marriage of Anna and Nassau will ensure that freedom shall 'evermore endure'.

Of all the masques surveyed here, it is *Love and Glory* which best expresses the sentiments which were now to become typical of the occasional masque. The ultimate power and sphere of influence is the country itself, which is always shown as an ideal Arcadia:

HAIL, *Britannia*, favorite Isle!  
Heav'n and Nature on thee smile;  
Diffusing thro' the happy Land  
Plenty and Peace, with lavish Hand.  
O may their Blessings never cease!  
Whilst other Nations groan in Chains,  
Mayst thou be known, whilst Earth remains,  
The Lord of Liberty and Peace.<sup>98</sup>

The gods smile on Britain, and the isle prospers. The implication is that they do not lavish similar treatment on other nations, hence their 'enslavement'; others are always presented at a disadvantage. There is no greater power or influence than the Britain itself and, while *Britannia*

In verdant Vales, in cooling Shades,  
Near purling Streams,  
In peaceful Dreams, <sup>99</sup>

lives entranced, it is George who bears the avenging sword and frees *Britannia* from cares, and Caroline who defends piety and learning. The monarchs of the court are intended to be complimented, for *Britannia's* ease is secure as long as George and Caroline are on the throne, for she feels

On downy Wings the Minutes fly,  
No horrid Jarr my Ear invades!<sup>100</sup>

*Britannia* makes it clear that her intentions are entirely for the

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increase of her own glory:

Guardian Pow'rs, around 'em waiting,  
Ev'ry adverse Toil defeating,  
Long and Happy make their Days,  
Both my Liberty's desending, [sic]  
Art and Science both befriending,  
Give my Name a brighter Blaze. 101

However, the consort's responsibility for piety makes no reference to the power of God, any more than George's courage and motivation seem to be used for anything more than the purpose of giving Britannia a day off. The brief mention of heaven at the end of the masque is a reference by the chorus (at this point probably consisting of the Graces and Mars's attendants, as well as the shepherds and shepherdesses) to celestial heaven of the pagan deities, who have manipulated and created the union. It is to Britannia that they appeal for approval and it is the union she sanctions which embodies the order superimposed on human affairs.

As will be by now apparent, the music for the wedding masques survives only in a fragmentary fashion, and in scattered and miscellaneous sources. While in many cases, some of the songs are all that remain of the work in question, it is possible to make some generalisations about the style of the pieces. Most appear to have had spoken dialogue, which was interspersed with songs and incidental music. If this speculation is correct, it could alter the status of the surviving songs, for the missing material may only comprise the spoken text and incidental music, the songs being the only vocal settings required. Depsite Fiske's suggestion that *The Happy Nuptials* was the first masque of the century to have had

spoken dialogue, that distinction belongs to Allan Ramsay's *The Nuptials* of 1723.<sup>102</sup> From the beginning of the century, masques appear to have been all-sung works, their role as a musical interlude in spoken drama naturally excluded spoken text. The genre's adoption by Colley Cibber in the the mid-teens to form the basis of his attempts to 'give the Town a little good Musick in a Language they [understood]', but 'Compos'd after the Italian Manner' only confirmed this practice.<sup>103</sup> By the 1730s however, there was no pretence on the part of the theatre managers; a direct and obvious approach suitable to the occasion was all that was required.

Of the seven masques, two had spoken dialogue - *Britannia and Batavia* and *Aurora's Nuptials* - and two were all-sung - *Love and Glory* and *The Festival*. Of the remaining three, we can only speculate. As far as *The Happy Nuptials* is concerned, Fiske's case for a spoken text rests on part of the libretto published in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, which consists of forty lines in heroic couplets, too many, he suggests plausibly, for one recitative.<sup>104</sup> This hypothesis is probably correct. The published libretto indicates that the only music in the masque occurs at the end when Daphne announces Lycidas, who assisted by the chorus 'with exulting voice' celebrates their union.

It has always been assumed that the music for *Britannia* is incomplete; certainly, it survives only in eighteenth-century short score. However, if the *The Happy Nuptials* was a masque with spoken

dialogue, it is possible that *Britannia* was in the same form. This is supported by its being always referred to an 'entertainment' in the *Daily Advertiser*, a term often used to describe mixed media entertainment.<sup>105</sup>

The spacing and probable allocation of the songs is suggestive. Each of the major characters has at least one air or duet; the two most important characters have one air each and a duet, and 'Nature bids the world rejoice', if assumed to have been originally in four parts, makes a suitable finale. The texts of these pieces have in them as much action as one would expect to find in a masque of this variety, and the probable length of the work would be approximately right for an afterpiece. There is clearly some dance music for the nymphs and swains missing, and there might, perhaps, have been a short overture, but apart from this, the music for the masque could be substantially complete.

Although nothing is known of the *The Nuptial Masque*, Galliard's earlier works - *Calypso and Telemachus* (1712) and possibly *Circe* (1719), and the masques *Pan and Syrinx* (1718) and *Decius and Paulina* (1718) - were all-sung and it is possible that *The Nuptial Masque* followed in the same tradition, although there is no other evidence to support Fiske's claims.<sup>106</sup>

The surviving music for these masques which can be found listed in Table II vi 12, has several features in common. Firstly, the form of most of the pieces is binary. Of the three exceptions to this,

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'Mariana's Chorus' and 'Noble stranger I approve thee', have an A-B-C structure. In the case of the former, A is a seven bar chordal introduction. The latter is truly tripartite, with the B section being a phrase of lower tessitura than A or C, and constructed over a pedal. 'Thrice welcome Royal stranger' probably has an A-B-A structure, with new text to the second A section. The modulations (when they occur) are all simple, usually moving from the tonic to the dominant or subdominant in A, and back to the tonic in B. Secondly, most of the music is in ballad style. It is all small scale, the tunes are simple and relatively short - in *Britannia*, the longest piece that survives is 36 bars - showing that, above all, the need was to entertain the audience, rather than to make demands on their concentration.

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### Later Occasional Masques

That an occasional masque was now linked to an event rather than to a regular date such as Twelfth Night or Shrovetide precluded its automatic appearance in any theatrical season. However, the concentrated activity in the 1733-34 season meant that the form was now established - or perhaps it could be said to be re-established - as a possibility to mark a national occasion.

Before proceeding further, it is necessary to provide some parameters for the use of the term 'occasional'. Until now it has been fairly straightforward. It is a work written to celebrate an event of consequence to the nation, and is one that, either by direct or allegorical representation, reflects that event. However, in the case of the first attendance of the Prince of Wales at the theatre on 31 January 1767, for example, the masque by Thomas Hull and J. C. Bach marks the event, but it does not itself celebrate it, and that the scarcely credible performance was given by a cast of children is extrinsic to the piece.<sup>107</sup> On the other hand, there are masques which are laudatory of the nation, but which do not seem to have been inspired by any particular occasion. Here, *The Choice of Apollo*, performed at the Little Theatre in the Haymarket on 11 March 1765, provides a good example.<sup>108</sup>

The twenty masques listed in Table II vi 13 were written to celebrate Royal occasions or performed to mark Royal events and, as

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Michael Arne's masque of *Hymen* illustrates, their content differed little from those of the 1730s. After the overture,

*the Curtain rises to Soft Musick, and discovers a rural Scene, a Temple in View, Hymen asleep in a Bower, an Altar, and a Torch unlighted.*<sup>109</sup>

Cupid enters and sings of marriage and how perfectly both friendship and love can be combined. Cupid has come to Hymen's bower to tell of the cessation of war and that, as the reign of violence is over, that of love and marriage begins. They call on Venus, who orders Hymen to prepare the 'sacred rites of love'. Before he does so, he requests Venus to declare to whose marriage the torch should be dedicated. Venus declares that the Prince of Brunswick, 'a prince, a hero and a worthy man' is to be honoured at the altar; Venus and Hymen then extol the charms of the fair and virtuous Princess. The match has Jove's approval, and Cupid kindles the torch on the altar. The marriage chain is forged, and blessing given on their union. The new state of peace and marriage, in contrast to the disorder of the recently ended wars, is confirmed by the entry, dance and grand chorus of nymphs and shepherds.

The masque of *The Birth of Hercules* and the insult that it narrowly missed delivering to the Royal family has already been touched upon; this score is entirely lost, but appears to have been one of Arne's finest:

It was rehearsed, but never performed. The music was entirely beautiful, but it would not probably have succeeded; it was not dramatic. The songs composed for BEARD, TENDUCCI, PERETTI, and Miss BRENT, were of the first excellence. I was present at the rehearsal, and their effect will never be erased from my memory.<sup>110</sup>

Dibdin's judgment on the drama throws interesting light on the way masques were beginning to be assessed - to speak of the 'drama' in a masque was to miss the point.

James Hook's *The Masque at Cox's Museum* in the pantomime *Trick upon Trick*, published in 1772, seems to celebrate a Royal marriage, but there is no indication which event was intended, and there is no convenient royal wedding around this date. It is unlikely to be celebrating the marriages of either Henry, Duke of Cumberland or William, Duke of Gloucester, the King's brothers. Both caused scandals: the former clandestinely married Mrs Horton at her home in Mayfair, while the latter revealed at about the same time that he had been married to the widow of the Earl of Waldegrave since 1766. These two scandals led to the Royal Marriage Act, in the formulation of which George III played a leading role, and which was passed in 1772 after much opposition. The passing of the Act seems to be the only possible event related to a royal marriage which could be celebrated by this piece.

The masque of *Coelina* is an interesting exercise and was clearly written before the Prince of Württemberg had even landed. Its author, Henry Lucas, had already dabbled in this style of text with *The Tears of Alnwick*, a pastoral elegy on the death of Elizabeth, Duchess of Northumberland. The sentiments which it contains have by now been well-rehearsed in this chapter, but the libretto contains an interesting blanket instruction to whichever composer decided to set the text:

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Should this piece have the good fortune to engage the COMPOSER'S art, for which it was certainly intended, and without which it must be allowed, in the fascinating hour of Musick, to lose with some more than half its effect, this Poetry may either stand, to be altered to Blank Verse, for Recitative, or to any measure, that may be judged most applicable to the purpose. This remark will serve throughout. At Present the measure is entirely the effusion of FANCY in the moment of writing.<sup>111</sup>

That the work was published and circulated before the Princess's landing is shown by another note:

As this Work was at Press before the Fleet arrived, though not intended to have been published before the Ceremony was over, it was thought better to leave Blanks for the place of the PRINCESS'S landing than to hazzard a wrong name. The Reader will please now fill them in.<sup>112</sup>

Both comments are the only contemporary illustrations given by an author of what was probably one way of planning and writing masques - the initial idea of the author, his completion of the text 'on spec', the adjustment by the composer of the words and the premature publication of the text. The marriage also inspired other masques, most notably *The Fairy Festival* which, with a text by John Rose and a score by Thomas Attwood, was first performed at Drury Lane on 13 May 1797;<sup>113</sup> it was then staged on 17 May, in the Chapel at St James's, the night before the wedding took place.<sup>114</sup>

The pattern of masque writing to mark other events can be seen in Table II vi 14. As with other occasional masques, the works usually had only a few performances near the event in question, although those pieces without such a link such as the later *The Institution of the Garter* or *The Masque of King Arthur*, tended to do better at the box office.

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After the signing of the Treaty at Aix-la-Chapelle in 1747 - an event which inspired three masques - the form loses what impetus it had as a vehicle to celebrate events other than those with Royal connections; in any case, works such as *The Temple of Peace* show that they, too, conform to the style outlined above. As can be seen in Table II vi 15, in scene i, Mars arrives to a symphony of warlike instruments, attended by Soldiers, &c. Using Mars' recitative 'Inspire the vocal brass, inspire' and his air 'Sound the trumpet' from the *Secular Masque*, he declares for a state of total war. Venus appears and announces the world has had enough of war, for 'All Europe now begins to groan and dread the sound of arms'. Venus offers love as an antidote, and sings the first two couplets of 'Calms appear when storms are past', again taken from the *Secular Masque*. Mars takes no notice, but on the subsequent appearance of Cupid, who threatens to shoot Mars with his dart unless he falls before Venus, he 'drops his sword and shield, which the Cupids seize. He then kneels to Venus, is rais'd and embraces her' while they all join in a chorus. In scene ii, which '*Opens and discovers the Temple of Peace*', Venus calls for Peace, who enters to 'take effect'. In scene iii, set in a landscape, Ceres and the shepherds look forward to a period of prosperity, now that Peace has arrived. Silenus, the old pastoral character, longs for youth, a bottle and a lass. Bacchus arrives to fulfil one of these conditions, and his entrance is announced by Silenus with the air, 'The Jolly God in Triumph comes'. There is no dramatic reason for Diana's appearance; it is probably an excuse to include the popular Boyce air 'With horns and with hounds'. The final scene takes place

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inside the Temple of Peace. All the characters are present and join in a chorus praising George who brought 'these blessings to your isles.' He is, apparently, of superhuman strength:

He drew the sword  
Confusion roar'd  
And clouds ov'rspread the air

He spoke the Word  
Peace was restor'd  
And all the sky was clear

He raises, and makes discord cease,  
He frowns, 'tis War - He smiles, 'tis peace.<sup>115</sup>

That the work was written for, and performed in, Dublin, explains the specific mention of Hibernia, although this is something of a double-edged compliment, for Hibernia is only the echo in the cry of praises for *your* King. The score can easily be reconstructed from the libretto, which reveals it to be a conglomeration of popular music drawn from a range of masques and other well-known pieces, including Boyce's setting of the *Secular Masque*, Purcell's *King Arthur* and Arne's *Alfred*. Here, the method of pastiche that has been used is different to that employed by Carey in constructing the *The Festival*, for while Carey took old tunes and fitted new words, Pasquali simply plundered the nearest pieces for popular tunes with appropriate words - it is not a co-incidence that so much of the music is from other masques - then arranged them in an appropriate order and linked them up.

Arne's masque of *Britannia* from 1755 - one of the few masque scores to have been published in its entirety, if only in piano score - has many topical references, such as that to press-ganging.<sup>116</sup>

Genest suggests that it was written to mark the outbreak of war with France:

A French war having broken out, Mallet prepared a Masque called Britannia - Garrick spoke the Prologue as a drunken sailor - it was delivered with the humour, and from the nature of the subject was so popular, that it was called for many nights after the Masque itself was laid aside...<sup>117</sup>

As usual, something was salvaged from the masque.

Even in the case of a work which was not prepared hurriedly for a specific event, standards continued to fall, if Thomas Davies is to be believed:

The masque [Arne's *Britannia*] has little variety in it, nor does it charm either with power of imagination or energy of sentiment. The Britons are called bold and brave in one place, rough and honest in another. The plainest is the truest of heart - Let not Punic art amuse thee - Let not Punic cartels abuse thee, &c. With such trite thoughts and hackneyed metre does Britannia abound.<sup>118</sup>

Towards the end of the century, George III was also allegorically represented in the King Oberon and Arthurian legends, as is shown in Table II vi 16. The first and last masques in the group have already been mentioned. Sadly, the sources are again fragmentary, but for *The Fairy Favour* we have an interesting set of accounts. Not only are there payments to the children,<sup>119</sup> but bills for sundries - 'Paid Farrington & Scarr for Robbons [ribbons?] 11s & 6d';<sup>120</sup> and 'Paid Mr Cousins for hair dressing in *The Fairy Favour* £1.4s. and Mr Thompson for the same £1, 12s.'<sup>121</sup> - survive.

The third and fourth pieces belong together and suggest more inter-house rivalry. Of Garrick's reworking of Gilbert West's play under

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the title of *Institution of the Garter or Arthur's Round Table Restor'd*, only the book of songs and choruses survives.<sup>122</sup> The masque opens in an unspecified place; the exchanges with the Chief Druid and the woodland imagery suggest a grove or glade. By scene iv, we are in '*The Chapel of St. GEORGE. The KNIGHTS seated in their Stalls*'. Scene v moves us to the gates of Windsor Castle, and closes with '*THE PROCESSION of the KNIGHTS to St. GEORGE'S HALL*'. The final part takes place in '*St. George's HALL, where the knights are discovered seating [sic] at the Round Table*'.

Examining Thomas Arne's setting of Colman's *The Fairy Prince*, we find that here after some woodland scenes, '*the West Front of St. George's Chapel, at Windsor*' is discovered; this changes to '*a Vision of the inside...with the original Knights in their several Stalls*'.<sup>123</sup> The first part closes with the duet '*Whilst all the air shall ring, long live the King*'. The second part builds up to the '*THE PROCESSION TO ST GEORGE'S CHAPEL, OF THE SOVEREIGN KNIGHTS COMPANIONS, KNIGHTS ELECT &c &c &c*'. The third part takes place initially in Windsor Park, moving to St George's Hall for the final celebration of the Installation of the Garter.

Anyone confusing the two works could be forgiven. Garrick at Drury Lane had already had his Arthurian procession in *The Institution of the Garter*, and the management at Covent Garden - which at this stage included Colman himself - had to follow suit less than a month later. This circumstance provides a possible explanation for the libretto, which consists of a hurriedly compiled pastiche of

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Jonson's *Oberon*, West again, and Dryden. There is no obvious occasion for the composition of these two works. The Order of the Garter was well established, but was awarded in January and June 1771, dates which do not suggest any real connection with performances in October and November. As far as other events of the year are concerned, nothing seems to be particularly helpful - March and April saw the pro-Wilkes riots, George III and the Prince of Wales's birthdays were on the 24 May and 25 August respectively, and the only treaty signed that year was the Spanish declaration and counter declaration covering the Falkland Islands. The one possible anniversary which could have inspired such an outburst of patriotic feeling is that of the accession of George III on 25 October 1760; but as this had occurred eleven rather than ten years ago, this is an unpromising line of inquiry. Despite its unlikelihood, one perhaps has to accept at face value the remark in the introduction to the book of songs and choruses, where we are told that there was much public interest excited by the 'late *Installation...*'<sup>124</sup>

Two more occasional masques can be mentioned. The first is *The Masque of Neptune's Prophecy* which formed the finale to *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, and which was an elaborate compliment to the country. It begins as

*Carthage being entirely covered by flames and Smoke,  
Clouds descend and fill the Stage.*<sup>125</sup>

A symphony follows, then

*The Clouds, opening again, discover the Temple of Neptune  
rising from the Sea.*<sup>126</sup>

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The sense of this short all-sung piece is that Neptune, through various devices, will protect Aeneas and Ascanius and their sons will rise to 'change to Britain, Albion's name':

Fair Science there and bright renown  
Thy glorious, happy sons shall crown;  
Their triumphs are decreed by fate,  
And only ripening ages wait!<sup>127</sup>

The second is *The Maid of the Oaks*, which, revamped as an 'entertainment' of the same title and, with sets by De Loutherbourg based on the original designs by Robert Adam, was immensely popular at Drury Lane.<sup>128</sup> The only sources which survive here relate to the work's theatrical form. The masque was part of a *fête champêtre* organised by Burgoyne to celebrate the marriage of his nephew, Edward Stanley, later twelfth Earl of Derby, to Lady Elizabeth, the only daughter of the Duke of Hamilton and Brandon. The fête consisted of singing, dancing and supper with a 'sylvan masque'. Unfortunately, we have no more details than those that can be gleaned from that paragraph given below:

The entertainment of the evening was exceedingly grand and agreeable. Its name was truly characteristic, every fanciful rustic sport and game being introduced. There were groups of shepherds and shepherdesses variously attired, who skipped about...many persons attired as peasants...who occasionally formed quarees to dance quadrilles. The day closed with dancing and the night opened with a display of a suite of grand rooms erected on the occasion...<sup>129</sup>

but it seems that not only the happy couple, but all the guests, many of whom were probably theatrical acquaintances of Burgoyne's and Stanley's, took part.

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## II vii The Masque 1690-1800 - An Overall View

The steeds of Phoebus have perform'd their task.  
His flaming car has reach'd the western goal!  
And day, retiring last, resigns the skies  
To night's more solemn reign.

William Shirley  
*The Birth of Hercules* 1763

Having considered the eighteenth-century masque from several terminological and historical viewpoints, it is now possible to chart its main thematic and formal developments. These are shown in Table II vii 1. It divides into three sections. The first part, 'To 1700', shows the performances of masques in the 1690s. The second concentrates on the position and function of the masque in a theatrical programme, while the third identifies the three main peaks in masque writing, each linked to the developments in English opera; it also illustrates the two subsidiary developments, the masque burlesque and the pantomime masque.

The 1690s opened with the performance of *The Prophetess; or The History of Dioclesian*, first performed at the theatre in Dorset Garden; 'this was the first 'opera' since Dryden's *Albion and Albanus* in 1685, a work which was reputed to have broken the box office.<sup>2</sup> *Albion* was not a semi-opera, but was sung throughout; the preceeding Betterton semi-operas - *Macbeth* (1673), *The Tempest* (1674) and *Psyche* (1677) - had appeared soon after the opening of the elaborate Dorset Garden Theatre in 1671. *Dioclesian* marked the

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beginning of a new, grander era, and thereafter, dramattick operas appeared with regularity until 1701, as Table II ii 1 shows.

The first masque in a predominantly spoken play in the 1690s was that in Anthony Rivers's tragedy *The Traytor*, performed at Drury Lane in February 1692; this was the first masque so interpolated since Francis Fane's new masque was inserted in *Valentinian* in 1685. However, this latter masque was probably not performed or set, and the masques previous to this were those in Tate's *Brutus of Alba* of 1678. This ten year hiatus, if it can be so called, may have been partly caused by the legacy of the expensive production of *Albion and Albanus*, the need to economise preventing the production of such extravagant trifles after 1685.

*The Rape of Europa by Jupiter* set a precedent for the presentation of smaller masques as interludes rather than as interpolations, but it was not until after the split in December 1694 between Rich and Betterton and the consequent departure of the latter for Lincoln's Inn Fields that this form proved to be an answer to the problem of presenting entertainments at the smaller, ill-equipped theatre.<sup>3</sup> These masques were sung throughout and had classical plots and characters. They contained little or no reference to political events, were not used to celebrate Royal occasions and were not seen by the authors primarily as vehicles on which to experiment with the production of opera in English. Their function in each case was to provide an opportunity within an evening of spoken drama for music, dance, song and, above all, spectacle.

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The masques in dramattick opera were larger than these interludes; they were also larger than the masques in spoken drama and sometimes had less relevance to the action. Consequently, such masques began to be divided into a prologue-like section, which set up the main proposition of the masque, a series of entries which explore that proposition, and a conclusion which resolves it. Composers began to link these sections together in elaborate key schemes and to produce text setting of great sensitivity.<sup>4</sup> These larger masques were precursors of the form that was used in the first operatic experiment, that of 1700, when a number of grandees put up a total of £200 in prize money, apparently at the behest of Jacob Tonson; at the very least, it must have been with his connivance, for he published the libretto for the work, *The Judgment of Paris*, and the competition was run from his house. The masque texts from around this period were to enjoy a brief currency in the 1740s, probably under the auspices of the Academy of Music at the Apollo; there are also one or two isolated examples of the form such as Christopher Smart's *The Judgment of Midas*.

The classical masque was also seen as the ideal subject for burlesque, for some of Congreve's text was alluded to in *The Beggar's Opera*, and the story was used as the basis for at least two later burlettas, *The Golden Pippin* and *The Judgment of Paris* set by F. H. Bathélemon.

The remaining two masques of the 1690s were independent pieces, one foreshadowing the later occasional masque and the other using a

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classical plot. Both fulfilled some of the old functions of a masque. Both were privately performed - *Europe's Revels* at Court and *Orpheus and Euridice* at the school at Besselsleigh - thereby offering the possibility for the participation of amateurs, a possibility that clearly did not exist when the former was performed later at Lincoln's Inn Fields. Both are isolated examples of their kind, although *Orpheus and Euridice* can be said to belong to a tradition of performing masques in schools, a tradition which includes the earlier works *Beauties Triumph*, *Cupid, his Coronation* and *The Triumph of Peace*.<sup>5</sup>

These two works also marked the end of the success of the masque as a mainpiece. As the 'Functions' section of Table II vii 1 shows, there were few masques written as mainpieces during the eighteenth century. Of these, *The Nuptials*, *Alfred* and the 'Sylvan Masque' at The Oaks were written for private performance and, although the two latter works reached the stage, they only did so in a much altered form. (It is difficult to conceive any theatrical end that would have been furthered by a public performance of *The Nuptials*). Of those that were intended for theatrical performance, *Telemachus* does not appear to have been publicly performed, *Coelina* and *Albion* never reached the stage, works such as *Calypso* and *Alfred* were not really box office successes, and *Comus* only became popular when it was reduced to a two act afterpiece. The two Arthurian masques - *The Fairy Prince* and *The Institution of the Garter* - relied more heavily on spectacle than these earlier works, but even then they did not have many performances. It is clear that the masque, now

almost exclusively a theatrical form, was unlikely to captivate an audience's imagination for an entire evening.<sup>6</sup>

The first decade of the eighteenth century was a watershed in the masque form. 1701 saw the last performance of the series of dramattick operas at Dorset Garden. The attempt to continue performing the genre by staging *The British Enchanters* and *The Wonders on the Sun* at the Queen's Theatre in the Haymarket in 1706 was unsuccessful, and *Orestes* was yet another unsuccessful attempt to persuade the public that they should take English opera seriously.<sup>7</sup>

Masques in plays after 1703 are usually settings of those in Shakespearean texts - for example, those in *The Tempest* and *Timon of Athens* - or are reworkings of earlier plays, such as the new setting of *The Mask of Orpheus* from *The Empress of Morocco*,<sup>8</sup> or the two masques for *The Muses Looking Glass*, which replaced the original at Covent Garden on 14 March 1748 and on 9 March 1749 respectively. Even here, the second one, *War, Peace and Plenty*, was obviously an occasional piece and did not attempt to fulfil the function of the original *Mask of the Virtues*, or, indeed, any of the intentions of the masques in plays.

The interlude-type masques in the eighteenth century came to an end at about the same time, and probably for the same reasons, as the interpolated masque. Its revival in 1715, taking the earlier interlude and, possibly, the Italian intermezzo as its model, was a



deliberate ploy by Cibber to establish English on the operatic stage. The structure of these masques, which generally had broadly pastoral themes, was based around the *da capo* arias of Italian opera, they were narrative and had abandoned completely the idea of entry, and, apart from the occasional scene in *Apollo and Daphne*, there is no indication that any political allegory was intended. The composer Pepusch followed the musical style of the Italian opera which originally had drawn large crowds, but since the novelty had worn off, was now in financial difficulties, as the performing figures in Tables II iv 1 and II iv 5 suggest.

The masques 'after the Italian manner' had a moderate success, with *Venus and Adonis* being the most popular. Four of these works were staged at Drury Lane by Cibber and were answered by Rich at Lincoln's Inn Fields with a less coherent group of pieces, which included the comic masque of *Pyramus and Thisbe*. This was a burlesque of Italian opera conventions that may have been inspired by the success of the masques at Drury Lane. The final group of masques used as interludes comes in the 1717-1718 season at Lincoln's Inn Fields, when Galliard persuaded Rich to allow him to stage a group of his own works at the theatre. *Pan and Syrinx* continued the tradition of the pastoral masque, but although *Decius and Paulina* used similar Italianate forms and conventions, its plot was a classical one. Like the classical masque, some of pastoral texts were later reset - *Apollo and Daphne* for example - although it cannot be said that they were ever in vogue in the same way as the former. The masque as an interlude then fell into disuse, and



the next two masques, both from the 1720s, are occasional pieces, independent works and, while of afterpiece length, are clearly intended for performance as mainpieces.<sup>9</sup> The masques at both theatres owed their appearance in part to the development of the multi-faceted theatrical bill.

Masque plots, particularly the pastoral ones, became at this time a vehicle for the introduction of pantomime. Pantomimes that can be dignified by the term 'pantomime masques' used masque scenes (dubbed the 'dullest' by Henry Fielding) alternating with scenes usually involving Harlequin (the 'dull').<sup>10</sup> Cibber, and later Lewis Theobald, were to claim that this was simply a way of introducing the public to serious opera; if these assertions are true, they failed to have any effect whatsoever.<sup>11</sup> By the 1730s, pantomime dropped the masque scenes, and any pretence of having a more serious function was given up.

It was as an independent afterpiece that the occasional masque was to flourish in the 1730s. The first masque here, *The Happy Nuptials*, was the first occasional theatre masque of the century and the first to be written as an afterpiece. The masque, which came to be used as a means to honour the Royal family, appears to have been brought back into vogue by the season of English opera at the Haymarket presented by Henry Carey and Thomas Arne senior. Among the operas presented was *Britannia* by Thomas Lediard, a long patriotic work which preceded the new flowering of masques in a

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similar style. It was with occasional masques that the Royal family would be honoured for the remainder of the century.

The public's response to the masque is reflected in the state in which the sources for the three main groups of works survive. In the case of *The Judgment of Paris*, the scores by Daniel Purcell and John Eccles survive in published full score. They are complete and, if not exactly lavish, are at least elegantly engraved and well produced, reflecting the professional esteem in which the established composers were held. Weldon was the least well known of the four winners and, although some individual songs appeared, his setting is still unpublished. That of Finger, the competitor who came fourth, is lost.

There are libretti and manuscript full scores surviving for all of the four Drury Lane pastoral masques. However, that they were not published reflects their role as short-term, ultimately unsuccessful, operatic experiments. Apart from *Venus and Adonis*, no one of the masques was very popular; although it was probably the comic nature of *Myrtillo* that was responsible for the publication of a large number of single songs from this piece. That the scores are complete, tidy, and largely free from error, is the result of the forward organisation and planning by Cibber. The experiment was a planned one, and was not conducted *ad hoc* in response to the demands of the Royal family, or in a hurried attempt to cash in at the box office.

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The occasional masques survive only in a scrappy form, and this, quite apart from the varied quality of both the libretti and the music, would tend to preclude modern performances. But it is this scrappy survival which reflects most clearly the attitude of the composers and authors towards these later pieces, and also that of the theatre managers who staged them, those who published them, and of the theatre going public.

The works were occasional in the truest possible sense: masques run up at very short notice to celebrate an event and dazzle the audiences. They marked the current feeling of the population, portrayed the greatness of the royal family, and provided an injection of patriotic fervour.<sup>12</sup> Masques such as the ill-planned *The Choice of Apollo* or the pretentious *Coelina* are examples of what happened when a higher artistic ideal was involved. The composers and the authors, having been requested by a playhouse to provide a masque, were usually faced with a very small amount of time in which to do so. After the wedding announcement of the Princess Royal was made, the first related masque, *The Happy Nuptials*, was performed on 11 November. This was closely followed by *The Festival* on 24 November. In such a short space of time, it was clearly an advantage to have one author such as Henry Carey, who was capable of providing or arranging both the words and the music, rather than becoming embroiled with a librettist and a composer. In the case of *Love and Glory*, a work of higher quality was aspired to, but it was merely fortuitous for the Drury Lane Company, that the continual delays in the wedding plans of the

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Royal couple enabled the theatre to present the masque on 21 March, only seven days after the wedding had taken place, but four months after it was first announced.<sup>13</sup> Authors such as Thomas Phillips and composers like Thomas Arne, were clearly not interested in sacrificing the quality of this work to meet the commercial needs of the theatre. The majority of masques were written by uninspired, and frequently untalented, theatre hacks.

The theatre manager's aim was to stage an event which attracted the public to his particular venue. John Giffard's control of Goodman's Fields dated only from the 1731-32 season, but he had already established a tradition of marking royal events at the theatre. For the King's birthday in 1731, a party with liquor and a bonfire was held and it was repeated in 1732 with the addition of music.<sup>14</sup> The wedding announcement in 1733, therefore brought what was, by now, a stock response for Giffard to a Royal event. The link between the 'English Opera' *Britannia* and the choice of the masque, then an outmoded entertainment, has already been suggested; what can be added here, is that such a desire also now had novelty value. The large number of masques and serenatas presented in 1733 and 1734 also reflects the desire by other theatre managers not to be outdone by Giffard. His invention, and his ability to attract an audience, threatened their playhouses. A masque, then, had to be produced and produced quickly for each occasion. There could be no delay - the performance figures in Table II vi 5 show that a masque received very few performances, especially after the event was over. In the case of *Love and Glory*, the work was bad business,

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costing a lot to stage, and receiving only one performance in the season proper.<sup>15</sup>

For the publisher, the poor quality of both the text and the music meant that the material was almost unsaleable. It does not seem to have been a viable proposition to market on its own, for not one eighteenth-century occasional masque survives complete in published full score and the music we have only survives because it was all included in collections usually assembled by the composer, such as Carey's *The Musical Century* or Arne's *Vocal Melody*.

The lack of other evening entertainments meant that the theatre of the eighteenth century was a meeting place for all classes of society, so that to present a masque honouring the occasion was the equivalent of the 'Television Specials' which precede every Royal event today. Among the poorer patrons of the theatre, it may have been the only celebration of the event that they saw, or, indeed, reached their ears. The audience had to be impressed by these occasions. It was common practice to charge more for new masques, and the theatre rioting in eighteenth-century London was an indication of how confident the playhouse managers had to be before they increased the ticket prices.<sup>16</sup> For the first performance of *Britannia; or the Royal Lovers* for example, the prices rose to stage boxes and balconies five shillings, boxes four shillings, pit two shillings and six pence and the gallery one shilling and sixpence. This was presumably justified by the fitting out of the house, which was done in a most extravagant fashion. From the

manager's point of view, however, unless such extras as described above were indulged in, the masques were perhaps easier and cheaper to stage than might be readily apparent. Many of the scenes that have been discussed in this chapter are, despite their rarified descriptions, stock scenes. All theatres would have had a classical building that would have served as the temple of peace, or a grove which could have fulfilled the function of Juno's bower, or could have improvised Neptune's chariot (with tritons) at short notice.

The successful performance of these masques as afterpieces shows that audience needed to be entertained quickly and briefly. What was required were a few quick rousing tunes, the portrayal of Britain as a powerful and influential nation, and a celebration of the event in question. This achieved, the audience could go home satisfied.

After the 1730s, there are compositions of interest, even of distinction - the masque of *Alfred* was one, the unset masque *The Judgment of Midas* by Christopher Smart was another and Arne's setting of the *Judgment of Paris* a third - but by and large, the new works written after the wedding masques of the 1730s are of a patchy nature, frequently with texts cobbled together, and scores by obscure composers.

Jonson had dedicated time and energy providing the masque with coherence of form; during the period that has been under discussion, the lack of consistent literary development resulted in

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a series of works that were either pastiched or cliched. The masque achieved no overall musical development either. Composers rarely set more than a few masques - Pepusch with four, Arne with a dozen or so, and Pasquali with six count among the most prolific - and apart from the three operatic experiments, these were only desultory efforts made by composers on particular occasions. The fragments of surviving masque music suggests that composers brought to the form the musical preoccupations of their operatic writing, and, although providing the required incantations, dances, processions and the like, lavished little care and individuality on it.

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Part III The Masque of *Alfred*: a Case Study in National, Theatrical  
and Musical Politics

Thy grateful Albion shall to lastest days  
Roll down thy glories in a tide of praise

James Thomson & David Mallet  
*Alfred*, 1751.

Introductory

The reasons for the choice of the masque of *Alfred* as a case study are manifold. Firstly, the work is one of the few masques that, for better or for worse, was continually revived on the eighteenth-century stage. Secondly, after *Comus* and *Acis and Galatea*, it was the most frequently performed of all such works during this period. Thirdly, the alterations and revisions made to it on each revival were undertaken by a variety of people and therefore illustrate different attitudes and approaches to the work. Its original form was the result of the political ideals and aspirations of one group of patriots who were not really interested in its dramatic or musical possibilities. During its revisions, however, its form was influenced by actors, singers and musicians, who had professional interests in how the masque was shaped. Finally, those who came into contact with the work included one of the most prominent composers of the eighteenth-century English theatre, a Prince of Wales and heir presumptive to the ruling house of Hanover, a formidable political circle, a politician turned political theorist who had gone into voluntary exile, a prominent critic, one of Britain's greatest ever actor-managers who later commissioned a

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revision of the work, the first production by one of the century's most influential scene designers, one of the country's greatest poets, and a well-known dramatist caught in an act of complex literary piracy.

The libretto of *Alfred* was the result of a collaboration between James Thomson and David Mallet, and was set by Thomas Arne. The first two presentations of the work were at the country house of Cliveden; publicly they were to celebrate the third birthday of Augusta, Princess of Brunswick, the daughter of Frederick, Prince of Wales, and granddaughter of George II. However, far from receiving the emblematic treatment of the more usual occasional masque, *Alfred* embodies some unusual problems not only in terminology of the masque genre, but in interpretation of the allegory. It does not belong to the earlier masque tradition which celebrates the divine right of kings, nor does it belong to the pastoral masque genre exemplified by Cibber's *Venus and Adonis*, unless the mere fact of its being set 'wholly in the country' can be considered sufficient to qualify it as such. It has no transformation scene, and possesses only the Genius of England as a semi-magical figure. Above all, it has no classical deities.

The pseudo-historical plot of *Alfred* is based around the invasion of Britain by the Danes, and it contains much patriotic material in the form of long passages of discussion of the virtues of Britain and the British people. As the story proceeds, however, it gradually emerges that the masque is a detailed blueprint for an

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ideal of kingship. Moreover, it is one that is in opposition to the style of the rule of George II and the politics of his chief minister, Robert Walpole. An examination of the figures surrounding the work's composition and performance suggests that the masque embodies a specific political ideal, and had a specific political purpose.

The following chapter will analyse the story, the allegory, the use of masquing devices, the circumstances surrounding the composition of the work, its original performances at Cliveden, and its first revision. This is followed by a detailed survey of each of the eight subsequent texts, and closes with a discussion of the music provided by Thomas Arne, Charles Burney, and Theodore Smith.

### The Plot

One constant in the otherwise tortuous history of this masque is the plot, for despite the addition and subtraction of characters and incidents, and the continual alterations to the score, the story remains the same in its essentials. The discussion below is based on the 1740 published libretto; later alterations will be considered as the discussion moves from version to version.

Thomson and Mallet append a short argument to the 1740 libretto, which helps clarify the background to the action, and sets the scene:

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*After the Danes had made themselves masters of Chippenham, the strongest city in the kingdom of Wessex; Alfred was at once abandoned by all his subjects. In this universal defection, that Monarch found himself obliged to retire into the little isle of Athelney in Somersetshire; a place then rough with woods and of difficult access. There, habited like a peasant, he lived unknown, for some time, in a shepherd's cottage. He is supposed to be found in this retreat by the Earl of Devon; whose castle, upon the river Tau, was then besieged by the Danes.<sup>2</sup>*

Act I of the masque opens on a plain. surrounded with woods. On one side, a cottage: on the other, flocks and herds in distant prospect. A Hermit's cave in full view, overhung with trees, wild and grotesque. Alfred is leaning on an 'aged oak', which is later revealed to be a 'goodly tree by wintry winds, torn from the roots and withering', symbolising Britain's fall to the Danes. The shepherd Corin and his wife Emma enter. They have, for some time, been giving shelter to a stranger, although they recognise that he is 'no common man', they have no idea of the truth, and they can only speculate that he is 'some chief' fleeing from the 'haughty and unbelieving Danes'. Corin aspires to serve his country: Emma suggests that this is the preserve of 'the rulers of the land', and sings longingly for the return of peace. ['O peace! the fairest child of heaven']. Corin quiets her as Alfred lifts his head to welcome the Earl of Devon. At Alfred's request, Corin found Devon the previous evening; he is also apparently in disguise, for he is known to the shepherd only as 'the woodman from the neighbouring dale'. Alfred reflects on the position in which they find themselves. Devon proposes that he should slip through the Danish lines besieging their one remaining castle, and rejects Alfred's suggestion that he accompany him, because it is important that the

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king remain alive and safe. He exits. *Solemn music is heard at a distance. It comes nearer in a full symphony: after which a single trumpet sounds a high and awakening air. Then the following stanzas are sung by two ærial spirits unseen. The spirits both sing of the need to avoid despair for 'earth calls, and heaven inspires'.*

[*'Hear, Alfred, father of the state'*]. They inspire Alfred with hope. The Hermit, *advancing from his cave*, is welcomed by Alfred, who asks for advice. The Hermit counsels Alfred that *'heaven is all, and man is nothing'*. Alfred expresses the hope that he may *'ne'er idly fill the throne of England'*. Their discourse is interrupted by a plaintive voice, singing of a lost lover. [*'Sweet valley say where pensive lying'*]. Alfred recognises the voice of Eltruda, and she appears. She and her party (mentioned in the instructions, but not in the libretto) have fled the Danes. The danger of their situation recedes in the joy of their meeting, and Eltruda retires to the cave to rest.

Act II is set at midnight of the same day. Alfred, alone outside the cave, is disturbed by anxiety for Devon. Eltruda emerges from the cave and joins him in his vigil *'to wait the wish'd return of morning'*. Alfred and Eltruda, reflecting on the position of their family, are suddenly flooded with brightness as the Hermit approaches. The Hermit counsels them to bear their load without repining in the noble manner. To encourage them, he calls on the Genius of England to give Alfred a glimpse of what the world could be if he gained his throne. *Music Grand and awful is heard, and The Genius, descending, sings the following song which is, in fact, an*

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incantation to summon the spirits of future heroic figures. ['From those eternal regions bright']. The *Spirits of* EDWARD III, PHILIPPA his queen, and the Black Prince his son, arise. The Hermit uses these characters to instruct Alfred and Eltruda in their duties. The *Spirit of* ELIZABETH arises to be used in the same way; finally the *Spirit of* WILLIAM III arises, completing the scene. Alfred is 'rais'd to new life', and both he and Eltruda recover their spirits and courage. As a 'warrior bright with Danish spoils' appears, a symphony of martial music is heard, during which the Earl of Devon and a company of soldiers appear. He has successfully penetrated the castle, inspired Alfred's flagging troops, and routed the Danes, killing their leader Hubba in the process. Devon has left troops completing the rout. To them CORIN, EMMA, kneeling to ALFRED embarrassed by their ignorance of Alfred's identity. Alfred grants Corin's wish to serve him, and Emma sings of the virtues of a shepherd. ['If those who live in shepherd's bower']. Alfred prepares to leave Eltruda with Emma and in the care of the Hermit, while he and Corin join the troops. A Bard appears, and, though old and blind, is favoured by the muses. He sings an ode ['When Britain first at Heav'n's command'] and the masque ends triumphantly with the Hermit's vision of the future and a final verse addressed to the audience:

Britons, proceed, the subject Deep command,  
Awe with your navies every hostile land  
In vain their threats, their armies all in vain:  
They rule the balanc'd world, who rule the main.<sup>3</sup>

The background source for the masque appears to have been *L'Histoire d'Angleterre* by Rapin de Thoyras, published in 1724-27. It was translated into English by Nicholas Tindal, the Vicar of Great Waltham and published in 1726-31; it was extensively revised for the second edition which began appearing in 1732.<sup>4</sup> The incident recorded in the masque is the battle which Rapin suggests took place in 878, and, although the details are entirely imagined by Thomson, the fall of Chippenham, the retreat of Alfred to the Isle of Athelney, his disguise and his concealment in a remote peasant's cot, the retreat of Devon to the last garrison at Kenwith Castle, the desperate and impetuous battle inspired by Devon's speech and the death of the Danish king Hubba in the battle, are all to be found in Rapin's account.<sup>5</sup> The emphasis by Thomson on the Dane's ungodliness was drawn from part of the terms offered by Alfred after the battle to those Danes already settled in East Anglia; they were forced to choose either baptism or exile.<sup>6</sup>

The scene in Act II involving the vision of the three historical figures seems to have been inspired by an incident which Rapin records, but dismisses as

...idle Tales of the Monks who cou'd not find it in their Hearts to pass over an extraordinary Event without introducing some *Apparition* or *Miracle*.<sup>7</sup>

The story that was circulated suggested that the change in the course of events to favour Alfred was

...reveal'd to him in a Dream by St. *Cuthbert*, formerly Bishop of *Lindisfarn*, who appear'd to him and told him he shou'd suddenly be raised to an infinitely more glorious State than *that* from whence he was fallen.<sup>8</sup>

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Tindal had dedicated the second edition of the translation of the *History* to Frederick, Prince of Wales, making it the most logical source for any work designed as a compliment to the heir.

The dedication itself is in the form of a strongly worded 'address', which, after several paragraphs of general warnings concerning the position of a monarch, concludes:

But above all, you will Here see the Origin and Nature of our Excellent Constitution, whence the Prerogatives of the Crown, and Privileges of the Subject are so happily proportioned, that the King and the People are inseparably united in the same Interests and Views. You will observe that this Union, though talked of by even the most Arbitrary Princes with respects to their Subjects, is peculiar to the *English* Monarchy, and the most solid Foundation of the Sovereign's Glory, and the People's Happiness. 9

The instructive nature of the address and the association of the Prince with past political figures foreshadows the allegory that Thomson and Mallet built into the masque.

### The Allegory: Frederick, Prince of Wales and Alfred

The masque has been ignored by most commentators of political theatre because it lacks the dramatic and allegorical vigour of Thomson's earlier works. Once the connection between Alfred and Frederick is made however, contemporary evidence to support this idea is readily located. In commenting on the masque, Aaron Hill in a letter to Mallet puts it succinctly:

...you have held *in* the mettle of your *genius*, with too short a rein, perhaps, in compliment to the (more humaniz'd than martial) *living Alfred* you designed to

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glance at.<sup>10</sup>

He goes further, commenting on the

fine touch'd *delicacies*, both of *satire* and  
*instruction*.<sup>11</sup>

The bookseller Davies much later admits that:

...it must be owned too, that the principles of government which he incalculates throughout the piece are liberal, and fit for the instruction of a prince who is to govern.<sup>12</sup>

And, more censoriously, The Countess of Pomfret writes:

The clown [Alfred] and his wife are made to speak the dialect of a hero and heroine in a court. The whole conduct of the piece is incorrect. There are two or three fine speeches, several party hints, and one invidious reflection - which did not need the pains that have been taken (by presenting it in a different character) to make it absolutely unpardonable.<sup>13</sup>

Upon examining the text of the masque, the similarity between the position of Alfred and Frederick, Prince of Wales, is immediately apparent. Frederick was an unfortunate victim of the inability of the Hanoverians to maintain balanced and reasonable relationships between generations. He had offended both George II and the power behind the throne, Queen Caroline, by his disobedience and his popularity. This had come to a head when, by extraordinary means, he prevented their presence at the birth of his first child. He was, consequently, banished from St James' Palace. In London, he and the princess then resided at Norfolk House. In the country, they lived at Cliveden, at Taplow in Berkshire. In the broadest allegorical terms, the masque can be linked to the Prince of Wales as a representation of a king-in-waiting. Alfred the good king is beleaguered by his opponents, the Danes, and is, to all intents and purposes, banished from his kingdom. Frederick was the king-in-

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waiting, banished from St James' and, like Alfred, had taken refuge in a rural retreat. The unlikely parallel between Cliveden and a shepherd's hut, only serves to emphasise that for Frederick, any alternative to life at Court is humble and impoverished. Frederick, too, is surrounded by his enemies; his father George II and Robert Walpole, the King's chief minister. Ultimately, though, Alfred, and by implication, Frederick, will triumph and their enemies will be vanquished.

Further, it has been suggested that the 'invidious reflection' mentioned to by the Countess of Pomfret is the passage in Act II scene iii in the first transformation scene which refers to the relationship between Edward III and the Black Prince, which parallels that of George II and Frederick.<sup>14</sup> This is confirmed by the letter written from Aaron Hill to Mallet on 4 August 1742, in which Hill discusses the rumour of Thomson's 'Tragedy upon the Story of the Black Prince':

I cou'd have rather wish'd to see one founded on that Part of the Life of Edward the 1<sup>st</sup> with the Prince of Wales, which shows him in the shining Light of the Preferrer [sic] of his infelt sense of filial Duty, to the Resentment of Paternal Injuries, a Deliverer & Restorer of the alienated Father, whome [sic] he had been harshly treated by ...etc. I cou'd have given him many Reasons in Support of such a Choice.<sup>15</sup>

This parallel was used throughout the Prince's life, and was extended further by *The Rememberancer* (1747-1751) which associates the Duke of Cumberland ('Butcher Cumberland', Frederick's younger brother) with the Duke of Lancaster, the younger son of Edward III,

whom his father seems to have preferred over the heroic Black Prince.<sup>16</sup>

The complete breakdown of relations between the Prince and the King and the refusal of the former to acknowledge Walpole as the King's minister and friend, made Frederick the logical rallying point for the opposition to the country's administration, and the circle that gathered around him was a talented and vigorous one.<sup>17</sup> The politicians included Lord Chesterfield, Lord Cobham, George Granville and William Pitt. The musicians included variously Bononcini and Sammartini, while the literary clique, which had as its mouthpiece Nicholas Amhurst's *The Craftsman*, embraced Pope, David Hammond, Edward Moore, Henry Brooke, Richard Glover, and the three figures concerned in the writing of the masque, George Lyttleton, James Thomson and David Mallet.

The politicians of this group consisted of men who, by and large, had broken with Walpole; as time went on, their number increased, making it a formidable group. It was Carteret's removal as Secretary of State in 1725, and the consequent exclusion of his supporters from the Government, that gave the impetus to the organisation of a serious opposition. William Pulteney, David Pulteney, and the Jacobites William Wyndham and William Shippen were early lights. Carteret, on his return from Ireland joined in 1730, followed by Chesterfield, Bolton, Cobham, Lyttelton, Grenville and Pitt in 1733, and, later still in 1739, John, second Duke of Argyll. The position of the notorious George Bubb Dodington

was a fluctuating one. He wrote obsequious poems in praise of Walpole, while criticising him to the Prince; he remained Frederick's friend until he was discredited by Lyttleton and Chesterfield in about 1734. He found a new patron in Argyll, and returned to the Patriots after losing his place at the treasury in 1740.

The members of the opposition can be seen in the contemporary caricature *The Motion*, one of the many which appeared satirising this event (Illustration 2). In February 1741, a motion was put to both houses of Parliament asking the King to remove Walpole. The mover in the Lords was Carteret, and that in the Commons, Samuel Sandys. Both motions were defeated, and Walpole hung on until February of the following year. The caricature shows the Opposition coach in Whitehall, careering out of control towards the Treasury. Sandys stands to the right, apparently blaming Chesterfield, on the box, for the defeat. Pulteney, who had taken a prominent part in the debate, pushes a wheelbarrow, laden with volumes of *The Craftsman* and other Opposition literature. Argyll is mounted on the trace horse, with the unlikeable Dodington underneath its hooves; as the doggerel below comments, Argyll was the hero of Scotland (he moved to dissolve the Union over the attempt by the English to impose the malt tax on the Scots) and Dodington the author of 'fawning verses'. The outrider is George Lyttleton, the postillion Cobham and Carteret is trying to escape the coach - Carteret was reputed at this time to be wanting to make his peace with the Court, although his speech in the resolution was considered

exemplary. The one remaining Opposition figure is Richard Smalbroke, Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, the 'patriot' bishop.<sup>18</sup>

Whether or not Frederick was really the centre or the head of the opposition is open to doubt. I have said above that he was the 'logical' rallying point. It was logical that an Opposition already formed should seize the opportunity offered by the differences between the Prince, and his father and Walpole. Initially only a feud, it became an open conflict when, encouraged by the 'patriots', the Prince demanded a higher salary on his marriage in 1736; they also brought this question forward in Parliament the following year.

Frederick's patronage of Giovanni Bononcini is widely reputed to have been inspired by his father's support during the same period of Bononcini's rival Handel, although it would be a mistake to assume that Frederick did so with no regard for the music, for he was a gifted amateur musician and composer. During Bononcini's first two years in London (1720-21), his operas received significantly more performances than those by Handel, and he continued to be an extremely popular composer. In any case, the whole Bononcini affair was just so much window dressing. Although Frederick withdrew his financial support from Handel in favour of the Opera of the Nobility for the seasons 1734-5 and 1735-6, it was restored in the 1737-8 season, with the Prince continuing to subsidise Handel's rivals.<sup>19</sup>

Giuseppe Sammartini was another matter. The composer had arrived in London in 1728 and made a successful career as an oboist in the London theatres. He was appointed music master to the Princess of Wales and her children, a post which he still held when he died in 1750.<sup>20</sup>

As far as the writers were concerned, it was Lyttleton, who had become the private secretary to Frederick, who persuaded him to give Thomson a pension and to employ Mallet as an under-secretary. Many of their works are dedicated to Frederick.<sup>21</sup> It is not surprising to find that Dr Johnson took an uncharitable view of the Prince's patronage:

He [George Lyttleton] persuaded his master, whose business it was now to be popular, that he would advance his character by patronage. Mallet was made under secretary with 200*l*: and Thomson had a pension of 100*l* a year.<sup>22</sup>

Davies's view of the role Mallet and Thomson played in the Prince of Wales circle probably best sums up the situation:

The politics of St James's and Leicester House being very opposite, these writers were employed by the friends of the prince to justify his conduct and vindicate his cause, by attacking the administration of Sir Robert Walpole.<sup>23</sup>

Some of the 'patriots' were not only united by patronage and political ideals, but by friendship. Their intimacy is shown by a letter from Lyttleton to Mallet written early in 1740, the year *Alfred* was first performed:

If you can leave My Lord Bacon for a night, your company will be very agreeable at my house next Sunday to *non inductis mensis* for there will be Ld Barrington, Hammond, Mitchel and Thomson, and by consequence, Learning, Witt, Honest Politicks and much Bawdy.

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Your most affect<sup>d</sup> Humble  
Serv<sup>t</sup> <sup>24</sup>

An influential member of the circle was the political theorist, Henry St John, Lord Bolingbroke. After the death of Queen Anne in 1715, Bolingbroke left England for France and had supported the attempts of the Stuart Pretender to gain the British throne. His impeachment immediately followed, and Bolingbroke lived in exile in France until 1725. After ten years, he began a period of voluntary exile again in France, finally returning to England in 1738.

In that year, Bolingbroke published perhaps his most famous political treatise, *The Idea of a Patriot King*.<sup>25</sup> Written in the tradition of earlier political treatises, such as those by Machiavelli and Erasmus, Bolingbroke's intention was to express an ideal rather than to present an entirely practical political strategy. The treatise takes as its central idea a state which has become thoroughly corrupt, and is in need of regeneration. There are two ways of achieving the revival of a state. One is the occurrence of a major event such as a revolution, out of which can emerge either a tyranny or a just monarchy. The other is by the actions and example of a 'patriot' king.<sup>26</sup> It is the latter solution that Bolingbroke advocates. A patriot king, in Bolingbroke's terms, is one who rules from a broad power base. If he is widely supported, he cannot represent a faction, nor rule primarily for his own advancement. A patriot king, therefore is more powerful than a tyrant or the leader of a faction because both he and parliament rule together.<sup>27</sup> To this end, Bolingbroke

ultimately supports a limited monarchy.<sup>29</sup> The office of king, and the individual who occupies it are clearly differentiated. The office is of right divine and is therefore sacred. The man, however, is nothing without the office, although he must have some intrinsic qualities - godliness and modesty - and possess an inherent virtue.<sup>29</sup>

The relationship of the themes of *The Idea of a Patriot King* to those of earlier literary works such as Richard Glover's *Leonidas* (1737), Henry Brooke's *Gustavus Vasa* (1738), David Mallet's *Mustapha* (1739), and Edward Thomson's *Edward and Elenora* (1739) has long been acknowledged and discussed. The position of *Alfred*, however, has largely been ignored.<sup>30</sup> From the very opening of the masque, Alfred's virtue is demonstrated to be 'not shew alone':

Modest of carriage, and of speech most gracious,  
as if some saint or angel, in disguise,  
Had grac'd our lowly cottage with his presence,  
He steals, I know not how, into the heart,  
and makes it pant to serve him. Trust me, EMMA,  
He is no common man.<sup>31</sup>

and later:

Behold him well: Fair manhood in his prime,  
Even thro' the homely russet that conceals him,  
Shines forth, and proves him noble. Seest, thou, EMMA,  
Yon western clouds? The sun they strive to hide,  
Yet darts his beam around.<sup>32</sup>

This is in contrast to the character of the Danes who are variously described as haughty, cruel, unbelieving, murderous, and above all, untrustworthy:

...those robbers,  
That violate the sanctity of leagues,  
The reverend seal of oaths; that basely broke,  
Like mighty ruffians, on the hour of peace,  
And stole a victory from men unarmed,

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Those *Danes* enjoy their crimes!<sup>33</sup>

The religious poverty ascribed in the masque to the Danes makes them unfit to govern. In Bolingbroke's terms, the office of king was sacred and should be administered by the reason given by God to man.<sup>34</sup> Another layer of allusion can be found here; the patriots claimed that they were the true defenders of the Church, thereby styling the Ministry as 'unbelievers'.<sup>35</sup>

Without his country and his people, Alfred is spiritually lost:

\_\_\_\_\_ Are these times for flattery?  
Or call it praise: such gaudy attributes  
Would misbecome our best and proudest fortunes.  
But what are mine? what is this high prais'd ALFRED?  
Among ten thousand wretches, most undone.<sup>36</sup>

As Devon tells Alfred, he has never before known ill-fortune.

Frederick likewise, has had no responsibility, and so neither of them know themselves or are aware of their own virtue. It was one of Bolingbroke's principles that a good patriot king has come through affliction.<sup>37</sup> Alfred realises that under the Danes, the English are an oppressed people, while under his rule, they will again be free, loyal and loved subjects. So, too, would they be under Frederick, who had been associated in the public mind with an ideal of freedom since the dedication to him in 1735 of Thomson's poem *Liberty*.

Most of the material in *Alfred* that relates to *The Idea of a Patriot King* is found in the historical tableaux in Act II of the masque. The choice of this medium through which to present such ideas shows Thomson's and Mallet's debt to Bolingbroke's attitude

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to history:

We ought always to keep in mind that history is philosophy teaching by example, how to conduct ourselves in all situations of private and public life; that therefore we must apply ourselves to it in a philosophical spirit and manner; that we must rise from the particular to general knowledge; that we must fit ourselves for the society and business of mankind by accustoming our minds to reflect and meditate on the characters we find described, and the course of events we find related there.<sup>38</sup>

After all

the school of example...is the world: and the masters of this school are history and experience.<sup>39</sup>

This idea is employed to educate Alfred (and thereby Frederick) in the ideals of a patriot king. The figures chosen point to a curious conceit of chronology. While to the audience Edward III, Philippa his queen, and their son, the Black Prince, Elizabeth I and William III were well-known historical figures, for Alfred and Eltruda they are figures of the future, figures which stretch away in a line from Alfred giving them hope and assurance.

Bolingbroke believed that the state was essentially an harmonious system and that, to maintain this, all private concerns were transcended by devotion to public duty.<sup>40</sup> If this balance is disturbed, it is not a new political system that is needed, but careful reform of the old. The king had at his disposal several tools of reform. He could undertake gradual moral reformation,<sup>41</sup> make virtue necessary for advancement in public office<sup>42</sup> and, most importantly, he could set an inspiring example to the people.<sup>43</sup> By the exercise of these qualities, opposition would be naturally extinguished.<sup>44</sup> And it is these methods of reform that constitute

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the basis for the material presented to Alfred in the three tableaux.

In the first tableau, the Genius summons the spirits of Edward III, Philippa his queen, and their son, the Black Prince. The Genius describes Edward's reign in Bolingbroke's terms:

A sovereign's great example forms a people.  
The public breast is noble, or is vile,  
As he inspires it. In this EDWARD'S time  
Warm'd by his courage, by his honor [sic] rais'd,  
High flames the British Spirit...<sup>45</sup>

Under the virtuous Edward, the British people had formed a noble nation. Edward's son the Black Prince has learned to be courageous in battle and has retrieved a damaged relationship with his father; the Genius counsels Alfred to behave likewise:

\_\_\_\_\_ Remember then,  
What to thy infant sons from thee is due  
As parent and as prince.<sup>46</sup>

The message for Eltruda from the example of Philippa is, as one might expect, to look after her husband and bring up her daughters virtuously.

The masque moves into the second tableau with the appearance of the spirit of Elizabeth I, referred to in the libretto as 'the Great Eliza'. Elizabeth's reign was one that was frequently glorified in retrospect, and to Bolingbroke, she was an excellent example of a patriot monarch. The Genius also uses her to illustrate Bolingbroke's second idea - virtue as a means of advancement:

With steady patience, thro' the maze of state,  
The storm of opposition, the mixt views,  
And thwarting manag'd passions of mankind.  
By healing the divisions of her people,

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And sowing that pest among her foes.  
By saving, from the vermin of a court,  
Her treasure; which, when fair occasion calls,  
She knows to lavish, in protecting arts,  
In guarding nations, and in nursing states.  
By calling up to power, and public life,  
Each virtue, each ability...<sup>47</sup>

Elizabeth, by the example of her own personal virtue, was able to maintain a balance between the factions which divided her subjects, and was also able to protect her state from its external enemies.

In the third tableau, William III is represented as not only a triumphant liberator, but as one who inspired the people:

...Lo! he comes:  
Wide o'er the billows of the boundless deep  
His navy rides triumphant: and the shores  
Of shouting *Albion* echo with his name.  
Immortal WILLIAM! from before his face,  
Flies superstition, flies oppressive power;  
...a better age begins.<sup>48</sup>

These are hardly a series of images redolent of the Opposition's view of George II, or of Walpole's administration. Small allusions can be found throughout the text; for example, there is at least one mention of the war (or rather, lack of it) with Spain:

She...shall rouse *Britannia's* naval soul;  
Shall greatly ravish, from insulting *Spain*,  
The world-commanding scepter [sic] of the deep.<sup>49</sup>

It was the severing of Captain Jenkins's ear by a Spanish commander which inspired the use of the phrase 'insulting Spain'. Despite public opinion, Walpole was steadfastly opposed to such a war, and it was this stance that was finally instrumental in toppling his administration.

When the transformations are over, the Hermit tells the king:

O ALFRED! should thy fate, long ages hence,  
In meaning scenes recall'd, exalt for joy  
Of some glad festal day, before a *prince*  
Sprung from that king belov'd - Hear, gracious heaven!  
Thy soft humanity, thy patriot heart,  
Thy manly virtue, stedly [sic] great, resolv'd,  
Be his supreme ambition, and with these,  
Thy happiness, the glory, that await  
Thy better days - be shower'd upon his head!<sup>50</sup>

As *The Rememberancer* declared towards the end of the 1740s, the Opposition felt that the only hope for the 'declining, consumptive Country' was in the Prince of Wales, the oncoming Patriot King.<sup>51</sup>

Another indication that the work was intended to illustrate the revitalising of the monarchy, is that, although it was intended for the birthday of the princess, the first performance took place the following day, on the anniversary of the succession of the house of Hanover. This view has in fact been put forward by Thomas Busby, although the implications of his having done so have remained unremarked.<sup>52</sup>

It is no surprise to find that private theatricals of some sort marked the Princess' birthday. Private theatricals are recorded at Kew,<sup>53</sup> as are performances by the Royal Children of *Cato*,<sup>54</sup> and Rowe's *Lady Jane Grey*.<sup>55</sup> There is also precedent for choosing a masque for such an event:

Yesterday being the Anniversary of the Princess Royal's Birthday, a Masque was prepared at His Royal Highness's Command, on that Occasion, by Mr. Rich, and perform'd by his Company in his Royal Highness's Garden's at Cue [sic], which were illuminated with above a thousand Lamps.<sup>56</sup>

Frederick's role in the writing of *Alfred* is unknown. Alan Dugald Mckillop refers to David Hammond as the Prince's literary agent,<sup>57</sup> but Thomas Davies comments:

Thomson and Mallet were...commanded by the prince of Wales to write the masque of Alfred, to celebrate the birthday of the lady Augusta, his eldest daughter, which was twice acted in the Gardens of Clifden'.<sup>58</sup>

This claim appears in many sources - the advertisements for the 1744 Dublin performances, the Preface to Mallet's 1759 edition of his *Works* - but is extremely dubious. The title page of the most of the libretti say only that the performance was at the 'Special Command' of the Prince of Wales, or that the masque was 'Represented before their Royal Highnesses'.

Another doubtful assertion is that the masque was written under the close supervision of Lord Bolingbroke himself:

This masque was, I believe, written under the influence, and by the encouragement of Lord Bolingbroke; nor do the political maxims insisted upon in it differ from those laid down so copiously in his idea of the Patriot King. More than this, and what the reader will perhaps think worth his attention, Lord Bolingbroke wrote the three following stanzas in the celebrated song of Rule Britannia, in the year 1751, a few months before his death...<sup>59</sup>

There is no doubt of Bolingbroke's influence on the masque, but no evidence to suggest that he encouraged Thomson on this particular theatrical venture.

At least one commentator was more than pleased at the prospect of a reform of the character of the Prince of Wales:

There was never any thing gave me greater Pleasure, than to hear, that the *Heir apparent to our Crown* was entertaining himself with a *Masque*, wherein our great

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King *Alfred* was represented, as rising from the *utmost Distress*, to redeem and establish the *Liberties* of his Country... *A Prince of Wales's* pleasing himself with such a Representation, is a Sort of Pledge, that he will join similarly in *Alfred's* Prayer in the *fifth Scene* of the *first Act*: that he will endeavour to build the Publick Weal on *Liberty and Lawes*; and that he will disdain to think of establishing his Throne upon the *Tongues* or *Swords* of those, who count for Gain, what they villainously earn by sacrificing the *Constitution* and *Liberties* of their Country.<sup>60</sup>

Unfortunately the efforts to educate the Prince of Wales were of small advantage to those in Bolingbroke's circle. The Prince died in 1751, nine years before George II, and it was Frederick's son who succeeded to the throne in 1760. Bolingbroke himself died the same year, but his political ideals, which had been the inspiration behind the writing of the masque of *Alfred*, were already anachronistic:

By the middle of the eighteenth century it is doubtful whether political action could have restored the past; but there is no doubt that the old order could not have been recaptured by humanist methods and aesthetic performances.<sup>61</sup>

#### *Alfred* and *Comus* and the use of masquing devices.

The Ludlow masque by Milton had been revised and entitled *Comus* by John Dalton, and set to music by Arne as series of songs and choruses interspersed with spoken dialogue. The masque was performed in this version for the first time in 1738, and it is impossible that the composer did not identify similarities between it and *Alfred*. It may be that he was influential in the choice of the masque form as a vehicle for the allegory; it is, after all,

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one of the century's few serious literary attempts in the form. The masque was widely known at this point in theatrical history as either a rousing patriotic piece, such as the wedding masques of the 1730s, or in its classical form such as Boyce's setting of *Peleus and Thetis* by Lord Landsdowne. My original suggestion of a strong parallel between the two works was made in ignorance of Alan Dugald McKillop's article in the *Philological Quarterly* of 1962.<sup>62</sup> However, the similarities seem to me to be much more fundamental than those suggested by McKillop.

The essence of both *Comus* and *Alfred* is that they are deliberate exceptions to the rule, and, while they retain many masque conventions, these are manipulated in an entirely different way to that which might be expected. It could also perhaps be argued that the later alterations to the masque remarked on by McKillop:

The original political intentions soon became less relevant, and the enveloping poetry, never very robust, was completely subordinated to musical settings and elaborate scenic effects.<sup>63</sup>

result in the work being more closely related to the traditions to which he claims that it originally belonged.

*Comus* and *Alfred* share pastoral settings, and, although there is debate in both cases, it is possible that both were played out of doors to take advantage of the natural settings.<sup>64</sup> *Comus* requires a wood, and Ludlow Castle and town. *Alfred* needs a wood, a shepherd's cot, and the feeling of an island; assuming that the amphitheatre

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at Cliveden was the site of the performance, a spectacular view of the river can be seen on all sides of the stage area.

Both *Alfred* and *Comus* use as the principal device, the spiritual journey, during which the characters are transformed by reaching a point of greater self-knowledge. Alfred, like the Egerton children, is innocent. The Earl of Devon is quick to point this out to the despondent king:

My Liege,  
Who has not known ill-fortune, never knew  
Himself, or his own virtue. Be of comfort:  
We can but die at last. Till that hour comes  
Let noble anger keep our hopes alive.<sup>65</sup>

It is clear, too, from this passage, that Corin's cottage, like Ludlow Castle, is only a pause in the journey of life and that the self-knowledge that Alfred acquires is only part of a similar continuous struggle for a virtuous rule. Both Alfred and The Lady have an inherent, although as yet untried goodness. However, Alfred slips into despair at the loss of his kingdom, and has never before had to consider his style of rule, or the means he has at his disposal to shape his reign. By the end of the masque, the Genius of England has transformed him from a naturally kind but innocent ruler to a wise and virtuous monarch. The Hermit's vision of him is one who now is in

... early youth  
With living laurel crown'd, for deeds of arms  
That Reason's voice approves; for courage, rais'd  
Beyond all aid from passion; greatly calm!  
Intrepidly serene! - In days of peace,  
Around his throne the human virtues wait  
And fair adorn him with their mildest beams;  
Good without show, [and] above ambition great;  
Wise, equal, merciful, the friend of the man!<sup>66</sup>

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Alfred's enemies, like The Lady's, are the antithesis of godly virtue, for both represent disorder. The invading Danes are unbelieving and their godlessness makes them unfit to govern.

The Attendant Spirit and Sabrina, too, have their counterparts in *Alfred*, the former the Hermit, and the latter the Spirit of the Genius of England. The Hermit, like the Attendant Spirit, is Alfred's spiritual philosopher and guide through the masque. He is omnipresent and omnipotent, and has a clear view of life. Sabrina and the Genius are both semi-magical figures. It is the Genius who conjures up for Alfred the spirits of Edward the Black Prince, Queen Eltruda, Edward II, Queen Elizabeth, and William, and, through presenting their qualities, educates Alfred in Bolingbroke's ideal of kingship.

McKillop suggests, I believe incorrectly, that a basis for the composition of *Alfred* must have been James Dalton's version of *Comus*.<sup>57</sup> While I have stated that a recent familiarity with Dalton's work may have influenced the choice of *genre*, the *form* of the piece is clearly inspired by Milton's 1634 version, for both works have spoken dialogue, and both a number of songs inserted in the text which, with one exception, are spaced at roughly the same intervals, as Table III i shows.<sup>58</sup>

These songs and their contexts offer some interesting points for comparison. The first song in *Alfred*, 'O peace! Thou fairest child of heaven' is an invocation of peace in the war torn state (see MB,

xlvi, 67-70). Emma reminds Corin that although his heart may burn with a passion for vengeance, these feelings are a luxury enjoyed by those of greater station, and it is on him that their 'little all' depends. The vocal entry is made, unusually without reference to the opening material, and for almost four bars, holds a sustained d. Most of the non-vocal material here is derived from a small figure in bar 8 of the ritornello, which is repeated and otherwise developed. The air comes gracefully to a close, unfortunately contradicting the opening line of the text which follows, 'Hush: break thee off'. Although the sense of Milton's 'ffrom the heaven's now I fly' is quite different from that of 'O peace!', the function of both the airs is the same, for they both set and comment on the scene. That this was Lawes's intention, is illustrated by the fact that the text was created by the condensing of twenty lines of spoken dialogue from the epilogue.

'Hear, Alfred, father of the state' occupies the whole of the third scene, which is an entirely musical one (see *MB*, xlvii, 82-4).

Alfred, reflecting on the 'holy Hermit's cave', is brought up sharply by 'Solemn music at a distance':

Ha! whence  
These air-born notes that found in measur'd sweetness  
Thro this vast silence?<sup>23</sup>

It moves nearer and nearer, and ends in a trumpet call on high. The aerial spirits sing 'For earth calls and heaven inspires'. Alfred's impatience is gone, he is given hope, and then breaks free of 'th' entangling mass of earthly passions'. Thus inspired, Alfred is receptive to the counsel given to him by the Hermit. Although the

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connection with *Comus* here is slight, the appeal to a higher authority can be found in 'Sabrina faire'. The Spirit adds to the invocation of the 'gentle Nymphs not farr from hence', 'the power of some adiuring verse'. Sabrina thus summoned, responds to aid the Lady, for 'tis my office best to helpe ensnared Chastitie'. Both bring peace and hope to the troubled Sabrina and to the Heavenly Spirits in *Alfred*.

Arne has set 'Sweet valley' as an echo song, inspired perhaps by his own earlier setting of its counterpart 'Sweet echo' from *Comus* - Fiske considers both these pieces poor.<sup>20</sup> As might be expected, the echo in this small, strophic air, consists of the repetition by the amorous solo flute of the last figure of the vocal part (see *MB*, xlvii, 36-7). A small three note crotchet figure, ornamented with an upper appoggiatura, echoes Eltruda's sorrow, and England's sighing for their lost king - 'lead me' and 'whisper' - are expressed in short instrumental interjections. From the tonic of b, the key moves through A, the sharpest major key in the air, as Eltruda sings of England, and arrives at D; as she touches on her sorrow, the key moves back to the minor, moving to f# and returning to the tonic. Eltruda, like The Lady, is lost in the wild wood, and it is the song which, in each case, leads to discovery. Of course, The Lady is found by *Comus*, whereas here, Eltruda locates her husband, and in doing so, finds both physical and spiritual safety. That The Lady does not, is illustrated by Lawes's setting of 'Sweete echo' where, although she calls, there is no answering

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musical echo. Eltruda's later air came to play a pivotal role in the tonal orientation of Act I of the 1753 operatic version.

Unfortunately, no music survives for the song 'From those eternal regions bright'. The Genius, summoned by the Hermit, and preceded by 'Music grand and awful', descends singing the air. He conjures up from the 'eternal regions' the spirits which appear in the three tableaux. Milton's song 'By the rushie fringed banke' parallels this, for it is sung by Sabrina, attended by the water nymphs; it is she who releases The Lady from the spell of Comus, the 'unblest charmer vile'.

The final two songs, 'If those who live in shepherd's bower' and 'When Britain first at heav'n's command', are grouped closely together and mirror the finale to *Comus*.

'If those who live in shepherd's bower' is a graceful tune in strophic form, but while musically attractive, there is little to be said of the dramatic function of either the music or the text (see *MB*, xlvi, 53-5). It is an artless consideration of a shepherd's life, and is almost extrinsic to the plot, for it only incidentally reflects on Alfred's words:

Brave Countryman, come on. 'Tis such as thou,  
Who from affection serve, and free-born zeal,  
To grand whate'er is deemed sacred to them,  
That are a king's best honor and defence.<sup>71</sup>

Alfred does not acknowledge the air, and it plays no role in the plot. Yet the text encourages the peasants to be content with their

lot, and the final stanza - cut in later versions - proffers love, both personal and of the state, as compensation for the lack of splendour of a Court. As the Spirit in *Comus* says:

Back shepherds, back, enough your playe  
'till next sunshine holy daye.<sup>72</sup>

The scene in *Comus* opens with the change to Ludlow Town and President's Castle; then

...come in Countrie-Daunces, after them the attendant  
Spirit, with the two Brothers and the Lady.<sup>73</sup>

In both masques, the lower orders are cleared from centre stage to make way for the final resolution.

In *Alfred*, there follows the air 'When Britain first at heav'n's command' with its refrain 'Rule Britannia' (see *MB*, xlvi, 143-8). Introduced casually at the end of the masque, by the 'old, blind, bard whom the muses favour', it forms a focal point of Act II. A deceptively simple air, it was, as Burney remarked, one of the more attractive songs to emerge from eighteenth-century England.<sup>74</sup>

Although not the end of either masque, the final air represents the attainment of the goal of their respective journeys. In *Comus*, the children have been returned safely,

Heav'n hath timely tri'd their youth,  
Their faith, their patience, and their truth.  
And sent them here through hard assays  
With a crown of deathless Praise,  
To triumph in victorious dance  
O'er sensual Folly, and intemperance.<sup>75</sup>

Alfred has come through his spiritual journey a wiser monarch, and has now been restored to the throne. The country, likewise, has had its king returned and its freedom restored.

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Of course, the two masques differ in style and content, and in the use of at least three important masquing devices, are quite dissimilar. The first is that the Egerton children who performed *Comus* were 15, 11 and 9 years old, and it is they to whom instruction in the way of virtue was directed. It is the Earl and Countess of Bridgewater who are honoured by the attribution to them of the God-given attributes of wisdom and virtue. As has already been argued, it was Frederick whom Thomson and Mallet sought to educate and it cannot be supposed that the masque was intended to instruct those professional players who presented its first performance. The second is that *Comus* is a presentation in the true masquing spirit. The Earl and the Countess of Bridgewater and the town of Ludlow await the travellers at the end of their journey. Their second song 'praesents them to their father and mother'. Such a presentation is not part of *Alfred*. The allegory is present, but there is no direct link with, or appeal to, the Prince and Princess of Wales. A major factor in this, I would suggest, is that, whereas *Comus* is essentially timeless, *Alfred* has an historical plot which places Frederick and Sophia outside it, making it difficult to integrate them into the masque. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, The Lady and her brothers gain enlightenment by experience. Their journey is through the wood, they have their virtue tested by the events that take place there, and arrive safely at Ludlow Castle. Alfred's virtue is not tested before the audience. We do not witness the invasion by the Danes - even the battle takes place off-stage - and there is no real opportunity to see the country under Alfred's rule. The knowledge of Alfred's

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virtue, like the knowledge of his courage, is acquired from the speeches of Corin, the Earl of Devon and the Hermit. Alfred's enlightenment is not gained by trial, but by example.

#### The first performance at Cliveden, August 1740

*Alfred* appears to have been greeted with much enthusiasm by the country house party at Cliveden:

On Friday last was perform'd at Cliefden (by Comedians from both Theatres), before their Royal Highness the Prince and Princess of Wales, and a great Number of Nobility and others, a Dramatic Masque call'd *Alfred* written by Mr Thomson... Their Royal Highnesses were so well pleased with the whole entertainment, that he commanded the same to be perform'd on Saturday last, with the addition of some favourite Pantomime scenes from Mr Rich's Entertainments, which was accordingly begun, but the Rain falling very heavy, oblig'd them to break off before it was half over; upon which his Royal Highness commanded them to finish the Masque of *Alfred* in the House.<sup>76</sup>

Sadly, production details, accounts and correspondence relating to the first performance have not survived. Cliveden was only occupied by the Prince of Wales from 1737 until his death, and most of his papers and accounts appear to have been destroyed by his wife in case they contained any material which could incriminate her and their family. (The eighteenth-century house at Cliveden was itself destroyed by fire in the 1790s.)

The preparations for the performance were centred on Drury Lane, and it is clear that the manager, Charles Fleetwood, must have aided and abetted the enterprise for the production, such as it

was, was put together and taken to the country for the final preparations. *The Gentleman's Magazine* for 28 July 1740, tells us that:

This day was rehearsed at *Drury-lane* Theatre, a Masque entitled *Alfred*, in order to be represented before the Prince and Princess at *Cliefden-house*, on the First of *August*, when the following Song is to be introduced. I believe it will not be displeasing to your Readers, if you insert it now, and the Music next Month, Yours *W.C.*<sup>77</sup>

The company was not drawn from both theatres.<sup>78</sup> All the singers were at the time of the performance attached to Drury Lane - although Christina Horton was still part of the Covent Garden Company, there were already notices in the press that she had been 'engag'd to another Theatre', and she became part of Charles Fleetwood's 1743-44 season.<sup>79</sup>

The cast from the 1740 libretto gives Alfred - Mr Milward; Eltruda - Mrs Horton; Hermit - Mr Quin; Earl - Mr Mills; Corin - Mr Salway; Emma - Mrs Clive; Genius - Reinhold; Spirits - Isabella and Esther Young and some soldiers. The *London Daily Post* adds the musical roles; Eltruda was sung by Mrs Arne (the song 'Sweet Valley' is sung off-stage), the two spirits etc, Mrs Clive sang the two songs 'Oh peace thou fairest child of heaven' and 'If those who live in shepherds bower', the new Ode 'Rule Britannia' by Mr Salway, in the role of the Bard.<sup>80</sup>

Those organising the entertainment gave careful consideration to the way in which they presented the work to the Prince of Wales, for the Cliveden performance of *Alfred* contained little music. The

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choice of the second masque is obviously important; the Prince had to be entertained after all, not merely instructed. The evening's entertainment included at least one other masque, and some interpolated pantomime scenes and, from Thomas Busby's account of proceedings, it appears that there was also a fireworks display 'made' by Dr. Desaguliers.<sup>21</sup>

The identity of the companion work remains obscure. The following chronicle from the *Gentleman's Magazine* from 1 August 1740, suggests a work that does not exist:

a new masque of Two Acts, taken from the various Fortunes of Alfred the Great...also a Masque of Music, call'd 'The Judgment of Paris' writ by My Dryden;...<sup>22</sup>

Both W. H. Cummings and Roger Fiske use this quotation, but to suggest different works.

Cummings believes that the work intended was Thomas Arne's setting of William Congreve's text of *The Judgment of Paris*.<sup>23</sup> It seems unlikely that a piece of this importance, and one which includes so much attractive music, could remain unremarked upon by everyone attending the performance in 1740, or that Thomas Arne would not later have tried to take advantage of the Royal connection, as he invariably did in the case of *Alfred*. There is also evidence that Arne wrote *da capo* arias such as those in the *Judgment of Paris* only when he had the right singers and circumstances.<sup>24</sup> Neither the singers nor the circumstances were right at Cliveden. Finally, the advertisement for the first London performance in 1742, stated that

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the entertainment would include 'the Judgment of Paris, Written by Congreve, and New Set by Mr. Arne'.<sup>25</sup>

Fiske speculates that the same text was intended, but argues that the more likely setting was the one by Giuseppe Sammartini.<sup>26</sup> In favour of this proposition is the status of Sammartini in the Prince of Wales's household but his argument is based on his assumption that the original scoring of *Alfred* was as lavish as that of the later version of 'Rule Britannia' and of Sammartini's *Judgment of Paris*, an assumption which will later be shown to be false.

Neither Fiske nor Cummings address the question of who was actually there at the time to sing the parts. The assumption that the singers were simply on hand to perform the *Judgment of Paris* does not fit the facts. The singers of *Alfred* - Mrs Arne, Isabella Young, Esther Young, Mrs Clive, Reinhold, Thomas Salway - could not have sung Arne's setting. Reinhold was a true bass, and Arne's setting has no bass and requires two more than competent tenors.

Sammartini's version is equally incompatible. The role of Mercury is a bass-baritone part that is clearly not suitable for Reinhold, while that of Paris is written for a low alto. The only possibility is that Paris was played as a breeches part by one of the four ladies, while Salway sang Mercury.

Regardless of which of the two settings was performed, it is scarcely credible that Frederick would have taken delight in the

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presentation of two such didactic masques on the same evening. In *Alfred*, the Prince could see himself as the saviour of England; in *The Judgment of Paris* he could only relate to Paris recklessly choosing beauty instead of the power of state or the glory of the battlefield, a parallel that even Frederick would have interpreted as a cautionary tale.

I would like to suggest a third and more likely candidate for a companion work. A second announcement, published in *London Daily Post and General Advertiser*, gives this account:

Also perform'd a Musical Masque call'd The Contending Deities...and the humorous Pantomimical Scenes of The Skeleton taken from the Entertainment of Merlin's Cave, by Mr Rich and Mr Lalauze.<sup>27</sup>

The masque, *The Contending Deities*, was first performed in London at the theatre in Goodman's Fields on 7 May 1733. The music was by the Spitalfields writing-master turned composer, Peter Prellieur (c1685 - 1741). The cast included Mrs Meisis as Venus and James Excell as Bacchus. Unfortunately, no libretto survives for this work, but it is probable that it was a burlesque of the classical story of the judgment of Paris. It was to become a favourite subject for burlesque later in the century, and would account for the confusion of the original newspaper report. The fact that it was an old piece and probably one with poor quality music, would perhaps explain why there is no other mention of the work. There would have been nothing extraordinary in the inclusion of other pantomime scenes in the masque. The masque itself was originally a

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vehicle for pantomime presentations, and many included pantomime scenes and characters.

The cast seems to have been treated somewhat shabbily, and Davies includes the following disgruntled comment:

The accommodations for the company, I was told, were but scanty, and ill managed; and the players were not treated as persons ought to be who are employed by a Prince. Quin, I believe, was admitted among those of the higher order, and Mrs Clive might be trusted to take care of herself anywhere.<sup>88</sup>

Others have found an almost sinister motive behind the discrimination against Mrs Clive and others, but the reference to the former is ambiguous to say the least, and the favouritism shown to Quin was probably due to his position in the Royal household: he was employed by the Prince of Wales to instruct his children in pronunciation.<sup>89</sup>

While public puffs, and even private enthusiasms, can be found for the masque, doubts were expressed from the first:

A mask at Cliefden, on Princess Augusta's birthday, 'The Story of Alfred', wrote by Thomson and Mallet, Mr Grenville commends it and says it will be published. I own I cannot give much credit to it, for I rather imagine he commends as a patriot than a judge. I never knew anything of Thomson's that seemed to be wrote, or could be read without great labour of the brain.<sup>90</sup>

When the society hostess and literateur, Elizabeth Montagu, finally received her copy, her reaction, though racily expressed, was even less enthuſiſatic:

In the first scene, I stumbled into a glumphy pool and a trembling quagmire; it is a sublime piece of nonsense, with very few good things in it. I have not read it all, but have made no impatient inquiries after it. I think that the plot seems not unlike Gustavus Vasa, a hero in

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distress, whose je ne cai quai heroical fashion, in taking a walk, or sitting down on a bank, betray an air of majesty that you know may be a compliment to our countrymen, to show how sagacious they are, or that like lions, they can smell the blood royal.<sup>91</sup>

The view that the masque was dull and could be read only 'with great labour of the brain' was one that would be endorsed for the remainder of the century.

### *Alfred* in 1741

*Alfred* in 1741 represents the first intended version for performance at a public theatre. It was the Opposition poet James Hammond (d 1742) - appointed equerry to the Prince of Wales in April 1738 and, according to McKillop, operating also as a literary agent for Frederick<sup>92</sup> - who seems to have guided the masque's ultimate fate:

I have taken an opportunity of mentioning to the Prince that you intend to bring *Alfred* upon the Stage this winter, he approves of it mightily, and I believe it would be agreeable to him if you and Mr Thomson or at least one of you would call upon me at the old Bango in St James street on Tuesday sennight at about ten in the morning, that I might have the pleasure of carrying you to his R[oyall]. H[ighness].<sup>93</sup>

The sequence of events regarding these two versions has frequently been confused.<sup>94</sup> The chronology is as follows:

July	1740	<i>Alfred</i> rehearsed at Drury Lane
August	1740	First performance of <i>Alfred</i> at Cliveden
October	1740	Hammond to Mallet regarding the bringing of <i>Alfred</i> upon the stage 'this winter'
February	1740/1	Revised version submitted to the licenser by Charles Fleetwood (Text hereafter referred to as

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1741):

'If this masque is approv'd of by my Lord  
Chamberlain, I will order it to be perform'd at my  
Theatre.

Yr Humble Servant  
Chas Fleetwood  
Febr 9th 1740'

- Late      1741      Exchange of letters between Mallet and Aaron Hill,  
originally thought to refer to revisions in the  
1741 text, but actually refer to alterations not  
made until 1751 - see discussion below of 1751  
text.
- June      1742      Exchange of letters between Mallet and Aaron Hill,  
blaming Fleetwood's incompetent management for the  
delay in performing the work.

This sequence hinges on the fact that the date of Fleetwood's note  
on the *Alfred* libretto is old style, not new style, and therefore  
refers to February 1741, and not February 1740.

Turning to the text, it is impossible to believe that the 1741  
version was not directly copied from the 1740 printed libretto. The  
lines per page, the layout of the text and the punctuation are  
exactly reproduced in the Larpent manuscript. The first act is  
identical until scene vii, when a new song 'How long vain mortals  
will you stray' replaces 'Sweet Valley'. A short speech for the  
Hermit ends the act.

Act II is entirely new, and is chiefly remarkable for the  
introduction of the character of Edith. It opens with the Hermit in  
contemplation as the sun sets. The plight of Britain - 'lost to  
Freedom as to fame' - occupies his thoughts. 'Emma and other  
peasants' appear; she expresses similar sentiments and reflects on  
her past life. ['A shepherd's plain life']. Edith, discussed by

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Emma leaning weeping against a 'blasted elm', has lost her lover in battle ['A youth adorn'd with every art']; the elm represents the loss of 'her true love' to the enemy in the same way that the fallen oak in Act I symbolises the fall of Britain to the Danes. Emma and the peasants are joined by Corin with the news that the stranger they have been protecting is their king. Eltruda is heard off-stage ['Sweet valley, say, where, pensive lying'], and Corin and Emma are moved to search for 'this new wonder'. Alfred is then discovered, reflecting on the fate of the nation; he is interrupted by Corin with the news of the approaching Danes. Emma, the peasants and finally Eltruda enter, pursued by the enemy. Eltruda and Alfred are reunited, and Corin is dispatched to collect their children who have been left in safety in a 'low-built cottage'. The act ends peacefully, with Alfred protecting his family during the night, and Emma considering the married state. ['O how sweet the faithful sigh!'] followed by the chorus 'Nymphs and Shepherds never rove']. The whole act is essentially padding added to the masque to build it into a full-length piece. The appearance of Eltruda is accomplished with more economy and effect in the original version, but the attempts to make the audience reflect on the virtues of an ideal country life style are unappealing.

To support the addition of the Danish king, Mallet adds a short scene (Act II scene vi) between the two soldiers, and uses it to define the exact nature of the Dane's heathen practices:

Our country gods, those spirits that possess  
The boundless wilderness, that love to dwell  
With dreary solitude and night profound,  
Will guard the son of Ivar, to whose house

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    Their vassalage is bound by magic spell<sup>95</sup>

The image of the Danes' gods who 'possess the boundless wilderness, that love to dwell with dreary solitude' is one without comfort. The Danes worship mere graven images, whose loyalty they retain by witchcraft for the gods are enslaved by magic spells.

The new Act III is derived from Act II of 1740. Here too, there are similarities in the text layout and the punctuation, with a few superficial word changes. The most extensive addition to this act is the group of four short pieces for the Bard and chorus which punctuate Alfred's new speech inserted between 'Rule Britannia' and the Hermit's final address to Alfred.

As Table III 11 shows, the placing of the music reflects these changes. The delaying until Act II of the appearance of Eltruda necessitated the moving of 'Sweet Valley' from the end of Act I; this was replaced by the hymn for the spirits 'How long, vain mortals, will you stray?'. There is a new air and chorus to complete Act II, and the short choruses mentioned above at the end of Act III. Thomson was at pains to ensure that the music fell as close as possible to the end of each act to satisfy a potentially restive audience. The song texts fulfil the same functions as those of 1740.

The revised text was submitted to the licenser in February 1741. The performance of Mallet's *Mustapha* in 1739, a play satirising Walpole, had demonstrated how ineffectually the Licensing Act of

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1737 was being administered.<sup>26</sup> This play inspired a change of policy, and the stricter control imposed on the works being examined between 1739 and the end of Walpole's ministry resulted in the total suppression of four dramas, including Thomson's *Edward and Elenora*.<sup>27</sup> Whether it was because *Alfred* was felt not to be political because it dealt with abstract ideas and had no obvious personal parallel with Walpole and George II, or whether the licensors had the wit to see that the public would not be interested in a piece that was theatrically so dull is unclear, but the licence was duly granted. The whole matter of the licence seems to have been bungled, for by the time the work reached the London stage in 1745, the alterations to it were so extensive that the original licence seems irrelevant: although the new libretto reached the Examiner's Office, no application was made for a new one.<sup>28</sup>

Despite the revision of the text, there is no evidence that Arne completed the setting at this date, although some of texts - 'A shepherd's plain life' and 'A youth adorn'd with every art' for example - were used in later versions.

Arne's customary dilatoriness may have been one factor which prevented the staging of this version. Another is suggested by Hill in a letter to Mallet of 13 June 1742:

Pray, what became of *Alfred*? - I fear he ran aground upon the *Chamberlain & his Clerks*: or else it scarce cou'd have been possible we shou'd not, long ago, have heard of his Good Voyage.<sup>29</sup>

Mallet replied:

*Alfred* has long ago been licensed. Why it it [sic] was not acted last winter, I would tell you without reserve; were it not that I must then descend into some wretched detail of Mr Fleetwood's management.<sup>100</sup>

Charles Fleetwood's incompetent management was not confined to *Alfred*. His conduct as patentee and manager of the Theatre Royal seems to have begun propitiously, but by the late 1730s, had deteriorated and had already caused both Mallet and Hill to complain of the lack of control he seemed to have of the day to day affairs of the house. By 1743, Rich (of Covent Garden) and Fleetwood had been abused in print by their actors, and Fleetwood's principal actors had left to form a company on their own. Finally, in 1744, Fleetwood was obliged to mortgage the patent, and at the end of that year, riots at pantomime performances on 17 and 19 of November occasioned by his attempt to raise the prices, hastened its sale to the bankers, Richard Green and Norton Amber.<sup>101</sup>

The stories of Fleetwood's mismanagement were legendary and the only surprising thing about the whole saga is that Hill did not himself suggest this as the reason that the masque was not staged. London had to wait until 1745 to see the piece, this time in a new version by Thomas Arne, which he possibly had already prepared for Dublin.<sup>102</sup>

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*Alfred* in 1745

Thomas Arne and his wife Cecilia Young joined his sister Susanna Cibber at the Aungier Street Theatre in Dublin in July 1742.

Susanna Cibber had retreated from her affair with William Sloper which had become an open scandal. Arne went to London in August, returning to Dublin in November. He would remain there until working at Drury Lane in 1745.

*Alfred* formed part of Arne's second season - that of 1743-44 - being first performed on 10 March 1744.<sup>103</sup> There is no indication of what was performed for no libretto survives. The fact that all four performances were in conjunction with Arne's setting of the *Judgment of Paris* suggests, purely from the point of view of length, that the original 1740 version was that performed. Walsh believes that 1740 was the version used, although his assumption that the first performance of Arne's *Judgment of Paris* took place at Cliveden and his reference to a 'temporary theatre' in the grounds of Cliveden suggest that this may be accidental.<sup>104</sup> Scott believes that Arne wrote the 1745 version for Dublin, where it was first presented, and then brought to London.<sup>105</sup> One piece of evidence Scott omits could support this. An announcement for a performance of *Alfred* in 1743 appears to have been premature, for it never took place, and one explanation for this could be that Arne had not finished his revisions and additions to the work.<sup>106</sup> The song included by Mrs Arne in a concert on 23 July 1742 during

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Arne's first brief visit - 'O peace, thou fairest child of heaven' - was included in both the 1740 and 1745 versions of the masque, and does not, therefore, provide evidence to support either view.<sup>107</sup> Burney, at this time Arne's apprentice, commented on the first London performance of the masque with its patriotic air 'Rule Britannia':

Mar. 20<sup>th</sup> this year (1745) My Master Arne had Alfred the Great, of his own composition, performed for his benefit, "after the manner of an Oratorio"<sup>108</sup>

Burney's memoirs are, unfortunately, not accurate; the performance was for Mrs Arne's Benefit, not Arne's own. More interesting is Burney's comment on the manner of its performance. It has been widely assumed that because the libretto calls the work an 'opera' on the title page and was advertised as a 'drama for music', the masque must have been staged. Burney's comment is compatible with Mrs Arne's newspaper advertisement, the expenses including everything except scenery and 'habits', two items which appear in nearly every announcement of a new masque in the eighteenth century.

Mrs Arne hopes humbly the Town will not be offended at this small advance of the Price, this performance being exhibited at an extraordinary expence, with regard to the number of Hands, Chorus singers, building the stage, and erecting the organ; besides all the other incidentals as usual.<sup>109</sup>

It seems probable then, that despite the elaborate scenes detailed by Arne in the libretto, it was performed without action, costumes or sets 'in the manner of an oratorio'.

It has always been assumed that Thomson and Mallet's original text was adapted by Thomas Arne, and there is no reason to dispute this. The dialogue of 1741 has been drastically cut to allow time for the performance of the additional music, necessitating the inclusion of some new, though not entirely happy, linking passages of text, and at least one scene (the battle scene between Devon and the enemy in Act II scene i), has been added purely for dramatic effect.

Act I follows the 1741 Act I quite closely until scene iii. Here, it jumps to Act II scene iii of the 1744 text. The first scene of Act II is new - *A View of Kinwith-Castle on the River Tau.*

*Batteries playing against it, Soldiers on the Ramparts. Enter Earl of Devon with a Veteran Troop, beating back a superior party of Danes--- The Men fly who were playing the Batteries--- The Soldiers on the Walls, seeing the Success of the English Veterans, descend from the Ramparts, let down the Draw Bridge, and join them - while scene ii is based on 1741 Act III scene ii. This second act is essentially padding - what was originally a delicate moonlight scene between Alfred and Eltruda, now includes Edward, and the whole scene is mainly geared to introducing the two heavenly spirits. The act closes with an invocation of liberty from Alfred and Eltruda. Act III scene i simply consists of the song 'A Youth, adorn'd with ev'ry Art' taken from Act II scene ii of the 1741 text. The remainder of the Act is a truncated version of Act II scene iv of 1741, closing with 'Rule Britannia'.*

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As far as the song texts are concerned, Arne seems to have referred only to 1741, for, as Table III iii shows, the new version uses three songs which are exclusive to this version. The sources for the song texts are unknown except that the verse 'How sleep the brave' is by William Collins.

While the plot remains essentially the same, the whole ambience of the piece has changed, and as Table III iv shows, it has a new *dramatis personae*. This was the first appearance of Alfred's son Edward, who, during the later versions, plays an increasingly prominent role in the drama - the character is also appropriated by Mallet in his 1751 text. His first appearance is with Eltruda (as indeed are all his subsequent ones) and he acts mainly as her conversation partner (I iii). As already mentioned, he also figures in the moonlight scene (II ii), where the new dialogue ascribed to him summarises a large part of the Hermit's teaching:

Royal father,  
You told me once, when seated on your knee,  
That Heaven, though it may a-while afflict,  
It will not long desert the Good and Just:  
Sure you are good, for your poor faithful subjects,  
Even in ruin, lavish out your praise.<sup>110</sup>

Unlike 1741 where it is clear that the children with Eltruda are extremely young, the Prince is here a young man.

The cutting of the figures of the Hermit and the Genius is one of the most important alterations of all. With them has also gone most of their attendant dialogue and scenes. Alfred no longer has a spiritual guide - the device of the journey is now entirely absent

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- and he is presented as a mature monarch. The transformations involving the historical characters are gone, as has most of the material which was meant as instruction for the Prince of Wales. These factors, together with the omission of the Bard and the allocation of 'Rule Britannia' to the principal characters, ensure that, as Mallet was to claim in 1751, 'Alfred was the central character in his own masque'.

The overall impression one receives from reading 1745 is one of an added gentility. Eltruda has been hidden in a cloister rather than taken refuge in a peasant's cot, Alfred reclines (more than once) on a grassy bank rather than leaning against an 'aged oak' and the peasants have all been replaced by the shepherds and shepherdesses of a classical pastoral. The letter motif is also to the fore; Eltruda refers to a letter which she has received telling her of Alfred's whereabouts (I iii), and in Act III scene ii, a messenger arrives 'With an Express to the afflicted stranger'. There can be no doubt that Arne, whatever his intention may have been, completely failed to capture the same feeling of period that characterises Thomson's and Mallet's 1741 text.

The whole venture seems to have been unsuccessful. On 3 April 1745, Thomas Arne

...being informed that some persons have objected to the small addition of Prices, will (not withstanding he performs above £70 Expense) oblige the Town with this Performance at the Usual Benefit prices; viz: 5s., 3s., 2s., 1s. '11

This was merely a public face. We hear from Burney that the masque

was repeated on 3 and 24 April and on 23 May, but it was

...so ill attended, that there was not company sufficient to pay the expenses, & his performers, vocal and instrumental, consented to accept, at the end of the season, of half pay'.<sup>112</sup>

The masque was now quietly dropped from repertoire and was never again performed in this version.

### *Alfred* in 1751

The first public intimation of a new staging of the work in 1751 comes in the form of an advertisement which appeared on 21 February for the libretto to be published at noon two days later.<sup>113</sup> The twenty third was, in fact, the day of the first performance. Although advertised again for 1 March, in the event it does not appear to have been published until 8 March.<sup>114</sup> It was received with glowing reviews:

On Saturday night was played a New Masque called *Alfred*, at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane, before a very numerous and splendid audience. The piece itself, as it justly deserved, met with great and universal applause.<sup>115</sup>

And from Genest, that curious mixture of facts, tittle-tattle and scandal:

[An] abundance of songs, and some odes, were added, and many new incidents and characters; ...In decorations of magnificent triumphal arches, dances of furies, various harmony of music and incantations, fine scenes and dresses, this masque exceeded everything which had before made its appearance on the English Stage.<sup>116</sup>

Gossip included by Garrick's biographer Thomas Davies, suggests at least one possible reason for the decision to revive the work:



It has been said, that Mallet procured 'Alfred' to be performed at Drury Lane, by insinuating to Garrick that, in his intended *Life of the Duke of Marlborough*, he should, by an ingenious device, find a niche for the Roscius of the age. 'My dear friend,' said Garrick, 'have you quite left off writing for the stage?' The hint was taken, and Alfred was produced.<sup>117</sup>

As a preface to the 1751 version *Alfred*, Mallet included the following advertisement:

Having been obliged to discontinue the Duke of Marlborough's History for a few months past, till I could receive from a foreign country some papers of importance; that I might not be quite idle in the mean while, I read over, in order to improve, this Masque; the first draught of which had been written by the late Mr. Thomson in conjunction with me, several years ago. But, to fit it for the stage, I found it would be necessary to new-plan the whole, as well as write the particular scenes over again; to enlarge the design, and make Alfred, what he should have been at first, the principal figure in his own Masque. This I have done; but, according to the present arrangement of the Fable, I was obliged to reject a great deal of what I had written in the other: neither could I retain, of my friend's part more than three or four single speeches, and a part of one song. I mention this expressly; that, whatever faults are found in the present performance, they may be charged, as they ought to be, entirely to my account.<sup>118</sup>

However, this has long been shown to be a not entirely truthful outline of events. Genest points out that despite these claims, 'the first act of *Alfred* in 1751 does not differ *materially* from the first Act of 1740', and that Mallet, unless he had written the original without Thomson's assistance, was 'an impudent liar'. Mallet's veracity is dismissed by Genest, for

...what confidence can be placed in the assertion of a man, who in the very advertisement above quoted says - Having been obliged to discontinue the Duke of Marlborough's History... - of this history which he was obliged to discontinue he never wrote one line.<sup>119</sup>

Genest consulted the first act of the 1740 published text; the manuscript 1741 version is closer still to 1751. Act I of 1751

follows closely that of 1741, the few changes being made to incorporate the characters of Edith and Alfred's henchman, Edwin. Scenes i and vii of the 1741 Act II are omitted, though the main alteration here is the addition of Act II scene ix, which uses material from 1741 Act III scene iii. Act II does contain some new material, but much of it can be found in 1741. Mallet's usual method of adapting the text was to alter the opening of a paragraph or to cut most of the lines, making some passages read as dialogue, rather than as speeches.<sup>120</sup> There is also an added prologue and epilogue.<sup>121</sup>

Mallet (or more probably Charles Burney, who was employed to organise the music) borrowed the air 'Arise sweet messenger of morn' from the 1745 version.

Further light is thrown on the attribution of the adaptation by an exchange of letters between Mallet and Aaron Hill late in 1741, although only Hill's side of the correspondence survives. The most important of these documents is Hill's critical response to the text of a version of the masque which Mallet had sent him for his comments.<sup>122</sup> The letter is undated, and its correct chronological position is essential in the consideration of the revisions made by Mallet. John C. Greene suggests that it was written in the Autumn of 1740, stating that Hill's criticisms were influential in the alterations made to the masque between the publication of the Cliveden 1740 libretto and the 1741 manuscript version.<sup>123</sup> However, this does not fit the facts. Later in Hill's letter, the author

suggests that it is too late for any of his suggestions to be incorporated in the text, because 'the *Masque* is with the licenser'. The masque was not sent to the Examiner until 9 February 1741 and it seems unlikely that the date of Hill's letter could be before this. McKillop's suggestion that Hill was mistaken is illogical since Hill could only have known that it was at the licenser from Mallet. Further, Mallet and Hill were frequent correspondents and it is unlikely that Hill, having written letters to Mallet in between, would have waited until 21 December 1741 to reply to Mallet's response to Hill's letter of the Autumn of 1740.

The exchange seems to have been sharp and, if not precisely short, at least conducted fairly rapidly; the probable chronology of the correspondence, with conjectural dates of missing letters in square brackets, is as follows:

- |                  |                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| [Late 1741]      | [Mallet to Hill, with copy of the masque]                                                                                                                                                   |
| [Late 1741]      | Hill to Mallet with a careful criticism of the text. <sup>124</sup>                                                                                                                         |
| [Late 1741]      | [Mallet to Hill asking for further advice and elucidation]                                                                                                                                  |
| 21.xii.1741      | Hill to Mallet saying 'that one of the most irksome injunctions in Friendships is <i>advice</i> ' and suggesting more detailed alterations - misdated according to McKillop. <sup>125</sup> |
| [Dec/Jan 1741/2] | [Mallet to Hill, clearly accepting the above in an agreeable manner]                                                                                                                        |
| 31.i.1741/2      | Hill to Mallet - 'You would hardly think, dear                                                                                                                                              |
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Sir, what a pleasure it has given me, to find you  
favouring *criticism*'<sup>126</sup>

The importance of this chronology lies in the fact that Hill's comments cannot have influenced the licensing copy of 1741 as claimed by Greene, but should be examined in relation to the 1751 revision. As we shall see, it was Hill speaking when Mallet wrote that he had enlarged the design to 'make ALFRED *what he should have been at first, the principal figure in his own MASQUE*'.<sup>127</sup> What was the substance of Hill's criticism, and how does it relate to the 1741 licensing text?

The most important change was to attempt to make the work more dramatic, in a way that would be suitable to the audience of Drury Lane. Hill points out that, although it is well written and there are many fine passages, the masque 'yet languishes for *want* of what the stage calls *action*'.<sup>128</sup> The pill is then sugar-coated for he continues 'But this, 'tis probable, you judged less necessary in a tragic *masque* than in a regular *Tragedy*'.<sup>129</sup>

When Mallet came to work on the masque in 1751, his response to this criticism was the introduction of several transformation scenes in Act III. Arne had, in fact, applied the same remedy in 1745, of which the wildly impractical battle scene quoted above is one example. Ironically, these scenes give the piece some of the characteristics of the old court masque, rather than making it 'a regular tragedy'.

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When the country is seen to be safe, a new patriotic ode is introduced

It comes, it comes! the promis'd scene discloses!  
I see the *Danish* raven droop his wing!  
See *England's* genius soon again to heaven,  
And better days, in white succession roll,  
Without a cloud between!<sup>130</sup>

Alfred then passes

*...under the triumphal arches: The sun, at the same time, rising above the horizon*<sup>131</sup>

Although crudely done, the audience could not miss the association of the rising sun with the triumphal arrival of Alfred from the battle, to shed light upon their darkened world. Then

*The clouds break away; and on the edge of a rock, in full view, a spirit is seen amidst a blaze of light, who sings...*<sup>132</sup>

The triumphal procession begins with

*...a grand flourish of instruments the scene, gradually opening, discovers several triumphal arches, adorned with trophies and garlands, and from space to space beautifully illuminated. The procession is led by shepherdesses, strewing flowers.*<sup>133</sup>

Then

*This is followed by soldiers with palm branches in their hands. An Officer bears the Danish standard. Flourish of Instruments.*<sup>134</sup>

Then comes the semi-magical scene, which is the most interesting in terms of masquing techniques:

*Four Furies arise, to the sound of instruments in discord, at four different openings from under the ground, with torches in their left hands, and bloody swords in their right. They form a confused Pyrrhic dance, shaking and pointing their swords and torches round the king in their centre: till, upon a change of the music into regular harmony descends the Genius of England, with a crowned sword in one hand, and a laurel wreath in the other, on sight of whom the four Furies sink thro the openings they arose from. He presents the crowned sword and laurel-branch at the feet of the king,*

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*and reascends, while the following is sung.*<sup>135</sup>

The discordant music reflects the disorder of the spheres, represented by the Furies. The Genius of England restores order as the Furies retreat under the stage, and the music shifts to conventional harmony. The original relationship of the king and the spirit is thus maintained. The king is shown to be powerless until the Genius puts the spheres in order, and hands him the 'crowned sword and laurel-branch', symbolically giving the earthly ruler the means to enable him to rule effectively. Finally, the scene opens to reveal

*... the ocean in prospect, and ships sailing along .  
Two boats land their crews. One sailor sings the  
following Ode: after which, the rest join in a lively  
dance.*<sup>136</sup>

The ode is, of course, 'Rule Britannia'.

Hill's comments also inspired the addition of an Epilogue, spoken by Mrs Clive, who sang the role of the first shepherdess in the masque. It is essentially a small masque itself, and is laid out in a series of Entries illustrated by Table III v.

She has taken the Hermit's wand, and as she believes, unlike Nero, that the first aim should be to please, she is determined to entertain the audience. She waves the wand and *The scene opens, and discovers a beautiful valley, bordered on one hand by forrest trees, rising irregularly, and forming from space to space various groves. The prospect behind is a landscape of woodlands and of mountains that ascend above one another, till the last seem to lose*

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*themselves in the sky. From the summit of the nearest hill, a river pours down, by several falls, in a natural cascade. The warbling of birds is heard. The first entry, that of a husbandman, his wife and family, celebrates peace and the prosperity it has brought about. A second wave of the wand produces the second entry. Here a shepherd and a shepherdess celebrate their union. In the third entry, also created by magic. Soldiers descend the mountain by two different paths: at the bottom they lay down the spoils with which they are loaded; and then, advancing, two of them sing the following ballad. They celebrate the victory, and vow that they will continue to support the monarch. Finally, They all mix in a dance, to the pipe and tabor, to confirm the now ordered state of Britain.*

As Hill suggests, the formulation of the battle plans in Act I scene iii, is done by Alfred, rather than Devon, and he takes part in the battle. By these alterations, Devon ceases to be Alfred's confidante and an imaginative leader, and becomes a loyal servant carrying out orders which show the King's skill. Devon's battle plans are organised not by his own reconnaissance as in 1741, but by Alfred, relying on information brought to him by the new messenger, Edwin. Edwin's part is largely a reallocation of lines originally spoken by Alfred.

Hill also proposes that Alfred should leave his wife and children in the care of the Hermit in whose hands he should place the education of his heir, should he not return from battle:

Hence what a compass for *pathetic* parting, between *Alfred* and his *queen* ! What room for *generous* failings, and

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magnanimous performance of the public to the private happiness, on the hero's side! And what exulted resignation yet reluctant strugglings, on the lady's, betwixt nature, and a high sense of sovereignty.<sup>137</sup>

These events occur in scene ix of the second act and, suitably, form its climax.

*Alfred:* ELTRUDA - we must part -

*Eltruda:* What do I hear?  
My life, my love -

*Alfred:* Part for a few sad moments,  
That our next meeting may be long and happy.

*Eltruda:* What leave me now? O my presaging heart!  
Already, leave me! 'Tis the dreadful call  
Of glory, somewhat perilously great,  
And big with urgent haste, that tears thee from  
me.  
Oh ALFRED -

*Alfred:* No fond weakness now be shown,  
ELTRUDA, no distrust of virtue's fate.  
Thou and thy children are, at present, safe  
In this wise Hermit's cave. For what remains;  
My cause is just, my fortune in His hand  
Who reigns supreme, almighty and all-good.<sup>138</sup>

The proposal that the isle has been protected by the Hermit's supernatural powers is not developed. Hill also suggests that

The *Danish King* might have been taken in the sally... then, in an interview between the *Conqueror* and his captive... you would have found [a] fine subject for contrast, of the king and the tyrant.<sup>139</sup>

Mallet introduces the scene described above, which takes place in Act III, scene ix. However, rather than the King, as ransom for his life and liberty, undergoing immediate conversion to Christianity as Hill suggests, Mallet introduces the King's son Ivan, slain in the combat. Mallet has called the Danish King Hubba a name which Hill suggests is not poetic; Hubba appears in 1740, and 1741, but not in 1751, and comes from the *Thoyras History*. The scene which



follows parallels that of Mezentius in Virgil's *Aeneid*, although the king abandons himself to prison rather than to death.

One of Mallet's less successful alterations is the scene of the capture of the Danish King, related first by Devon, and then by Alfred himself. The King was surprised asleep, and awoke to find himself in chains, with 'not one blow exchanged'. Although it could be explained in a number of ways - the unpreparedness of the Danish nation and alertness of the British for example - it only seems to diminish Alfred's triumph. The Danish King is brought before Alfred, who says to him:

Your Gods are idols; that sole Power I serve  
Supreme and one, is universal Lord  
O'er earth and heaven. Be it my daily task  
As 'tis my noblest theme, to own, by Him  
Alone I conquer'd: as for him alone  
I wish to reign-by making mankind blest.<sup>140</sup>

Despite the King's refusal to renounce his gods, a position he maintains even after the discovery of the death in battle of his son, one cannot help feeling that he has a point when he declares to the victorious Alfred: 'What is all war, but more defensive robbery, made sacred by success?'.<sup>141</sup>

Hill's suggestion is that the masque should end here with Alfred being perhaps divinely inspired to call upon the Earl of Devonshire to build a fleet and protect the kingdom, and indeed, this is what Mallet does.<sup>141</sup> Alfred declares that:

Means more effectual  
Must now be try'd from our insulted shores  
To keep aloof this still-descending war  
'Tis naval strength that must our peace assure.  
But this, the first high object of my care,

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To wall us round with well-appointed fleets.<sup>142</sup>

The Hermit shows Alfred a 'radiant prospect' of Britain's influence and wealth, and as the King leaves to realise this vision, the Hermit gives him a glimpse into the future:

Yet ere you go,  
One moment, ALFRED, backward cast your eyes  
On this unfolding scene, where, pictur'd true,  
As in a mirror, rises fair to sight,  
Our *England's* genuine strength and future fame.<sup>143</sup>

In the later letter of 21 December, Hill makes various suggestions for rewriting particular passages to reflect the principles that he outlines in the opening part of the letter; these are not adopted by Mallet.<sup>144</sup> The page numbers refer to both 1740 and 1741, and no further concrete evidence that Hill was discussing 1741 can be found.

Mallet's alterations make the theme of the journey more shadowy and no longer the central device of the masque. Alfred's integrity and wisdom as a ruler is never questioned by the Hermit, who tends to provide moral support rather than effective spiritual guidance. Indeed, the role of the Hermit has now become marginal and is here confined to introducing the transformations.

Among the cuts which destroy the original process of Alfred's education is the removal of the historical scenes from Act III, which are replaced by the series of transformation scenes. The only surviving vestige of Bolingbroke's ideas is a short summary by the Hermit at the end of scene viii:

For her [England], O ALFRED, your more arduous task  
But now begins: this conquest to secure;

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To speak its influence wide, and, well improv'd  
 By unremitting vigilance and valour,  
 Make this one blow decisive of her fate.  
 But now behold, to animate thy hope  
 In mystic shew express'd what late fortune  
 Seem'd to portend; and what the brightening scene  
 With fairer promise opens.<sup>145</sup>

That Genest could write of Act III

The Hermit discanted at length on their future actions,  
 and paid a compliment to George the 2d.<sup>146</sup>

indicates how remote from the original allegorical context the 1751 version had become.

Apart from the destruction of Thomson's original intentions, Mallet's additions give much of the action an almost melodramatic quality:

Devon: He [the Danish monarch] yet lives: but, o dire  
 of cruel war!\_\_\_ a prisoner and in chains. chance

Eltruda: A fall how terrible! My breast is thrill'd,  
 And in the fierce barbarian mourns the captive.

Hermit: Such a fortune ever wait on wild ambition!  
 On war unjust that desolates whole nations  
 And leaves a world in tears for one man's  
 guilt.<sup>147</sup>

Commentary has replaced the philosophical verse of 1741 and fails to do more than present a superficial, moralistic analysis of the characters.

As John C. Greene states, Mallet's exact contribution to *Alfred* will never be known, but the foregoing discussion of Aaron Hill's influence on the 1751 revisions shows that it was even smaller than previously thought, and that claims by Mallet to have 'new-planned'

the whole are false.<sup>149</sup> The 1741 *Alfred*, clearly worked on by both Thomson and Mallet, was taken by the latter and altered in accordance with Hill's suggestions. Mallet did not have to acknowledge them for Hill was dead by this time, and Mallet simply paraphrased the original text to work in Hill's ideas. Had Genest read Hill's letter - he had the opportunity to do so, for it was published in 1753 - his strictures on the man he had already dubbed 'an impudent liar' would undoubtedly have been stronger.<sup>149</sup>

Both the advertisement and the playbill announced it as 'never acted before', but there is no doubt of the connection between this and the earlier versions. The public were not deceived into believing that *Alfred* was a new work, and Mallet found it expedient to publish a disclaimer:

Some persons, it seems, continue still under a Mistake that this Masque is the same with the first draft of one formerly written under the same title: they need only, to be undeceived, look into the advertisement prefixed to that performance just now printed for A. Miller, in the Strand.<sup>150</sup>

However, the public obviously preferred to base their judgments on the text.

### The Score in 1751

The circumstances under which Burney came to write the music for the new version of *Alfred* are no clearer than the reason Mallet chose to revive the masque. Arne had clearly given some cause for

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offence. Burney simply tells us that Mallet had reworked the piece, transforming it from 'a masque of two acts to a regular Tragedy of five acts, with incidental songs, duets and chorus'.<sup>151</sup> Burney evidently counted the prologue and epilogue here. Fiske speculates that Garrick must have 'turned down' Arne's all-sung version for the good reason that he wanted the part of Alfred as a vehicle for his own performance.<sup>152</sup> The latter is almost certainly true but there is no evidence that Garrick had rejected Arne's version. The new musical structure, including Burney's contribution can be seen in Table III vi.

Burney at this date (October 1750) wrote under the pseudo-collective title, 'The Society of the Temple of Apollo', a name invented by James Oswald, the 'Scottish Orpheus', violinist and music publisher based in St Martin's Churchyard.<sup>153</sup> The patent allowed him to publish all music composed by the members of the Society; in reality he published only Burney's music. Oswald:

...persuaded Mr Garrick that the members of this Society were gentlemen of taste and talents, who met to shew each other their compositions, & have them tried under the direction of two or three Masters to point out to them their mistakes in counterpoint. That some members had much original genius, & w<sup>d</sup> compose for the stage any pantomime entertainment, musical farce, or even incidental songs in serious dramas: For w<sup>h</sup> they w<sup>d</sup> want no money for themselves, all the remuneration they sh<sup>d</sup> require w<sup>d</sup> be some moderate gratuity for the Masters who [ ]. Garrick listened to his very attentively...<sup>154</sup>

Garrick's attention may well have been caught by the modesty of the Society's financial arrangements. After this initial flurry, nothing much seems to have happened, although by December 1750, requests began arriving from Garrick for music.<sup>155</sup>

There is no mention of the form in which the request for music for *Alfred* arrived. According to Fanny Burney's account Mallet seems to have met Charles Burney in about 1744:

..the young musician had the advantage of setting to music a part of the mask of Alfred (upon its revival; not upon its first coming out) which brought him into close contact with the author, and rivetted good will on one side by high admiration on the other'.<sup>156</sup>

Fanny claims that he, Mallet, was among the 'constellations of wits, poets, actors, authors and men of letters' that the young Dr Burney encountered at Susanna Cibber's.<sup>157</sup> Mallet's involvement is borne out by Arne's advertisement in the *General Advertiser* of 26 February 1751:

To the Public: As Mr. Arne originally composed the Music in the Masque of Alfred, and the Town may probably on that account imagine the Music, as now perform'd, to be all his production, he is advised by his friends to inform the Publick that but for two of his songs are in that performance, viz.: the first song beginning *O Peace thou fairest Child of Heaven*; and the Ode in Honour of Great Britain... *Rule Britannia, Rule the Waves* etc., which Songs he submitted to be mix'd with the production of others, to oblige the Author of the Poem.  
Tho. Aug. Arne.<sup>158</sup>

The 'poet' knew who Burney was and must have joined Oswald in deceiving Garrick.<sup>159</sup> Whatever the extent of Garrick's input, Mallet was the key figure as far as both the words and music are concerned.

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The 1751 Performances

Although the *London Daily Post* said that the work was played to 'universal applause', the account continued:

...the spectators rightly found fault with some improprieties in the performance of the inferior dances and actors which we hear will be corrected at this night's performance.<sup>160</sup>

A better idea of the reaction is gleaned from the prompter Cross who recorded that

...some of the Dances, being too long were dislik'd, & some of the Songs had y<sup>e</sup> same reception.<sup>161</sup>

Two nights later there was still

A little Noise at y<sup>e</sup> Singing & Dancing<sup>162</sup>

Burney's account is more positive. He had had to play the organ in a concert in the City, and came to Drury Lane by coach and on foot, arriving after the performance was well under way in a crowded theatre:

I entered luckily, at the close of an Air of Spirit, sung by Beard, [possibly 'From those eternal regions bright'] which was much applauded - This was such a cordial to my anxiety & agitated spirits, as none but a diffident and timid author, like myself, can have the least conception. The piece went on very prosperously for five nights...<sup>163</sup>

This version had nine performances.<sup>164</sup> As we have seen, it was the theatrical additions which caught the attention of the critics, reflecting earlier negative comments on the masque; as Genest put it, the ideas of the piece did 'vastly well at Court, but would have been dull at D.L.'<sup>165</sup>

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**The version of 1753 and 1754**

Thomas Arne reworked the libretto and the score for a new operatic version which made a brief appearance in the mid-1750s. Arne was probably inspired by the success of Mallet's 1751 staging to revive the work and, whether out of pique or ambition, created a three act *Alfred* which survives almost in entirety.

In preparing the libretto, Arne referred to 1741, 1745, and to Mallet's 1751 text. Although, as Table III vii shows, the song texts have been largely reorganised, and Arne has added a small scene with Emma which closes with a new chorus 'We come from hill, from dale and grove', the action is essentially the same as 1745. The main alteration, and one which shifts the emphasis of the action, is the removal of the part of Devon. His later role and functions are given to Edward, Alfred's son, who consequently grows in stature, playing a prominent role in planning the battle in Act II and leading one part of the troops to Kinwith Castle in Act III. 'The shepherd's plain life' has been introduced from 1741 or 1751, while 'Tho' to a desert isle confin'd' and 'Why beats my heart with such devotion' both come from 1745 only.

Act II is totally different here, however. The only surviving incident is the meeting at night between Alfred and Eltruda. Their intimacy is even shorter lived here, for they are interrupted by Edward with a messenger from 'valiant Edwin', a character Arne

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borrowed from 1751. The news is good and the battle can proceed. Arne introduces a 'Flourish of instruments in the air' as a prelude to 'Hear, Alfred, father of the state' (1741, 1745, and 1751), 'Sing heavenly choristers, sing, sing' and 'Guardian angels O hear me' both from 1753. From here until the end of the act, the material is largely reflective, and the aërial spirits sing to Alfred a grand *NEW FUNERAL DIRGE, in honour of the heros who die in the service of their country*'. There is almost no dialogue in this Act.

Act III, too, has little dialogue. The action has been reduced to three incidents - the discovery of the identity of Alfred, Eltruda's concern for Alfred's safety, and the triumphal arrival of the victorious troops - and includes 'Arise sweet messenger of morn' from 1745; the rest of the act is new, 'When Britain first at heav'n's command' being the exception.

Arne's sole aim was to reduce the dialogue as much as possible to allow for more music. The speeches are short, the action rapid, and the incidents kept to a minimum. The genteel feeling of 1745 not only remains but is enhanced by the removal of the short battle scene that opens Act III.

What has remained an unremarked peculiarity is that the 1753 version did not mark a return to the repertoire for the masque. It was performed only once in the 1752-3 season, on 11 May, for the 'Benefit of the Charitable Hospital for the Lying-In Women, in

Jermyn St., St James'.<sup>166</sup> It was an afternoon performance and the 'Ladies [were] not expected to come dress'd'. Its only other performances also took place during the benefit season. The first was on 27 March 1754, 'For one night only, being desired by several Persons of Quality'.<sup>167</sup> For Arne's own Benefit, the performance was 'done in the manner of an oratorio'. A libretto, also published by Miller, duplicates the 1753 text. In 1755, this time on 19 March, *Alfred* was dusted off: this time, tickets could 'be had of Arne in Chelsea St, Covent Garden, and of Vasey at the Stage Door' and unused tickets for the two preceding performances of *Abel* were also accepted.<sup>168</sup> No libretto survives for this performance, and under the circumstances, it would be rash to assume that the text was the same as 1753, although it is likely that it was.

#### The oratorio versions of 1759, 1760? and 1762

Arne's next three adaptations of *Alfred* were all oratorio versions for, although the 1745 text was performed as an oratorio, it was announced, and is more appropriately thought of, as an opera. As can be seen from Table III viii, there are four oratorio performances of *Alfred* recorded during the century and all are from the period 1759 to 1762.<sup>169</sup> Only three libretti survive; GBLbm 1490 e.8, GBLbm R.M. 5.e.6.(5), and GBEP WMA24N-63.

The libretto GBLbm 1490 e.8 is fairly easily disposed of. The cast list it contains: - Alfred - Mr Lowe; Eltruda - Miss Brent; Edward

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- Miss Frederic; Emma - Miss Plenius; Edith - Miss Carter; Corin - Mr Mattocks - corresponds with the list of singers in the Arne Benefit concert at Drury Lane on 23 March 1759, at which *Alfred* was given; it was probably the version given on 30 March too. It is an adaptation of the all-sung version staged at Drury Lane in 1753 and 1754. The songs and choruses that appear in these versions, appear in the same order as 1759, with the exception of 'O peace! the fairest child of heav'n', which now appears as the penultimate number to Act III, rather than the third number in Act II. The only major alteration to the score - the removal of the choruses and 'There honour comes a pilgrim grey' from Act II - correlates with the omission of the spirits from the *dramatis personae*. This cut is replaced by Alfred's song 'Sacred is war and truly good', which closes the act. The musical numbers are shown in Table III ix.

The only remaining new music here is 'O what joys does conquest yield', the text of which has been borrowed from Arne's version of Congreve's masque *The Judgment of Paris*. The reason for the inclusion of this air seems to relate to the reorganised libretto of the *Judgment of Paris* for 1759.<sup>170</sup> Located by the present writer in the Bodleian Library, the title page advertises it as performed at Covent Garden and gives the cast as Venus - Miss Brent; Juno - Mrs Abegg; Pallas - Mrs Lampe; Paris - Mr Lowe; and Mercury - Mr Mattocks, and clearly relates to the advertisement for the performance for Lowe's Benefit at Covent Garden on 3 April 1759.<sup>171</sup> Although it lists a chorus of shepherds and shepherdesses, the manuscript annotations indicate that all the chorus parts, bar the

last were cut and it is possible that this was sung by the soloists. The advertisement for Lowe's Benefit also describes the masque as having 'new additions' and the libretto itself makes the claim that the alterations 'made in the Masque' were 'absolutely necessary, in order to form a proper part for each performer'.<sup>172</sup> This is a patent absurdity. The nature of the competition in the plot inspired Arne to provide one good sized aria with attendant chorus for each of the three goddesses, an aria for Mercury and several small airs for Paris. There was also a duet for the two tenors and a trio for the three goddesses. Further, the 'new additions' seem only to have consisted of the new setting of the air discussed above and a new piece 'Full oft the conqu'ror to beguile' and some superficial reordering of the music. This version of the *Judgment of Paris* enjoyed a brief popularity, being performed twice during the 1759-60 season and twice at Ranelagh, once in 1760 and again in 1761.<sup>173</sup>

Whatever the musical reason for its earlier inclusion in *Alfred*, its text is apposite; Alfred has just entered, triumphant, from the battle with the Danish king, and the air reflects Eltruda's relief at his safe return and her joy in the recovery of their kingdom. As far as the plot is concerned, there are a few alterations in the recitative and, despite the reallocation of the numbers in the manner discussed above, there is no material change.

The libretto of the second oratorio version GBLbm R.M. 5.e.6. (5), tentatively dated 1760, has no cast list and cannot be related to

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any performance. I have already speculated above that the performance given on 30 March 1759 used the version for 23 March; the two libretti are so different and draw on different sources, that it is improbable they were performed in the same theatre seven days apart. It cannot belong to the earlier Covent Garden presentation of 2 February 1759, because the title page advertises the work as a version performed at Drury Lane, although that advertisement otherwise appropriately states that it had 'several new songs composed by Mr Arne'.<sup>174</sup> It is, however, still too closely associated to the Arne family to be an independent version; Thomas Arne junior played a concerto on the organ between Acts II and III.<sup>175</sup>

As far as the organisation of the material is concerned, 1760 does not rely simply on 1753 but returns also to Arne's text of 1745, providing further evidence of the Arne connection. I would conclude here that it was created without reference to the 1759 oratorio version and could possibly pre-date it. The result, shown in Table III x, is a curious amalgam of these two libretti and suggests that this version included those tunes which the composer felt were the most successful. The result is certainly the best planned musically and dramatically.

In Act I, scenes i and ii are taken mostly from 1745, cutting the air 'Though to a desert isle confin'd'. Some of scene ii and all of scene iii comes from 1753, cutting a small piece of dialogue, the big trio 'Let not those who love complain' and the air 'If those

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who live in shepherd's bower'. A small amount of new dialogue leads to 'Nymphs and shepherds come away' and the chorus 'We come from hill, from dale and grove' which also completed Act I in 1753.

Act II follows 1753, cutting the opening dialogue and 'From the dawn of early morning' and 'Hear, Alfred, father of the state'. However, after the air 'Though storms awhile the sun obscure', it reverts to the opening text of Act II scene 1 of 1745, adopting the following chorus, 'Speak drums, speak trumpets', as a finale to the new Act II.

Act III opens with new material, including the air 'Stretch'd along the river's flow'r'y side' and the air 'If those who live in shepherd's bower' is reinstated - either from 1753 I or from 1745 III. The dialogue then reverts to 1753 Act II, scene 1, cutting the airs 'Safe beneath this lowly dwelling' and 'Guardian Angels, O descending'. The new setting of 'O what joys does conquest yield' from the 1759 *Judgment of Paris* is inserted here. The text then returns to 1753, until the end, only replacing 'See liberty, virtue and honour appearing' with the new air 'Peace with Olive branch descending'.

Overall, the adaptation has to be described as a cut-price version, with much of the spectacular and interesting music removed and with the story slightly padded out with material from 1745. The lack of a cast list and the slightly more lavish production of the book suggests that either the performance was only projected and never

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took place, or that Arne and Lowndes were attempting to make money by duping the public into believing that this was the work as performed. Arne may also have decided to publish it as a definitive oratorio text, in the hope that revisions of the work might cease to be undertaken. If this is the case, there is the possibility, as in 1741, that the new airs were not set.

Despite being derived from different sources, these libretti have been similarly adapted, for the music omitted from both is that which is inessential to an oratorio but vital to a stage production. This includes the Act II slow symphony, the funeral dirge, the distant trumpets and the march with a side drum.

Not so the 1762 adaptation, for here Arne retains the slow symphony. This rather curious version survives in one source only - GBEP WMA24N-63 - and seems to be that performed on Wednesday 17 March 1762, 'Reduc'd to two acts'.<sup>176</sup> As shown in Table III xi, the music is ordered in almost the same sequence as 1753. Act I consists of music from 1753 Act I, omitting 'Come calm content', 'Why beats my heart' and 'Let not those who love complain'. Added to this to complete the first half, are 'O fatal love of fame', 'As calms succeed when storms are past' and 'Sing heavenly choristers, sing, sing' for 1753 Act II. The opening of Act II continues with 1753 Act II material, with only 'O peace thou fairest child of heav'n' coming after 'Speak drums speak trumpets', rather than before 'Gracious heav'n, O hear me!'. The remainder of the third

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Act - from 'O joyful tale! conduct protect 'em heav'n' - of 1753 forms the remainder of the 1762 libretto.

The motivation for this further alteration by Arne was the need for a companion piece to another masque, *Virtue and Beauty Reconciled*, which was performed as the serenata *Beauty and Virtue* on the same date, to celebrate the marriage of George III to Charlotte; this ceremony which had taken place on 7 September 1761. The subject of *Alfred*, now so far distant from the political situation of the 1740s, can easily be interpreted as a compliment to the monarch.

Only one performance of this two act version of *Alfred* is recorded.<sup>177</sup> This is unexpected because, as some of the songs were popular and the work concluded with 'Rule Britannia', it was an ideal candidate for a successful afterpiece in the manner of *Comus*.<sup>178</sup>

#### David Garrick and the 1773 version.

The first mention of a further new version of *Alfred* comes in a letter from David Garrick to William Hawkins, written on 16 October 1771.<sup>179</sup> Hawkins had sent Garrick a piece on the subject of *Alfred*, believed to be 'Alfred an Historical Tragedy' published in *A Collection of Miscellaneous Poems by the Same Author*. Garrick, on returning the manuscript, commented:

Alfred had given me both pleasure, & pain. did You not know that we have a Masque call'd Alfred, Which is

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preparing to be reviv'd at our house with new Musick? the part of his Story which is y<sup>e</sup> foundation of y<sup>e</sup> Masque, is likewise that of y<sup>e</sup> tragedy.<sup>180</sup>

There is no surviving evidence to explain Garrick's desire to revive the work. Thomas Davies's suggestion above is that it was originally staged in 1751 because Mallet had promised Garrick a niche in his biography of the Duke of Marlborough; in a similar vein it is possible that Garrick, conscious of his own standing, desired to be associated once more with a by now notoriously patriotic work. Whatever the reason, Garrick retrieved the work, ran up some new words and paid Theodore Smith £26 5s to write some indifferent music. The production opened on 9 October 1773 and had a total of 8 performances which, although it is not an unsuccessful run, hardly repaid the expense incurred by Drury Lane.<sup>181</sup>

Unlike the confusion that surrounds Mallet's input into the 1751 version of the masque, Garrick's contribution to the 1773 text is preserved in a text in the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington and is part of that institution's small collection of Garrick prompt books.<sup>182</sup> The rest of the volumes are mainly Shakespeare texts and these have been discussed by Kalman Burnim in *David Garrick: Director*.<sup>183</sup>

The first point to be made is that this is one of the few masque libretti of the eighteenth century that has any manuscript annotations at all.<sup>184</sup> It is certainly the only one where those annotations bear on the work's staging as well as on musical and textual organisation.

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The second is that the printed libretto into which these alterations were inserted does not relate to the performances for which it was used. The printed libretto is a copy of the text prepared by David Mallet for Garrick, published in 1751. Into this have been inserted instructions and alterations in preparation for the 1773 performances.

Burnim and others have suggested that the annotations are in two hands; those of David Garrick and William Hopkins, the prompter of Drury Lane from 1760 to 1780.<sup>185</sup> Pedicord and Bergmann claim four hands; Garrick's, Hopkins's and two amanuenses.<sup>186</sup> Garrick's is that which can be found altering 'Rule Britannia',<sup>187</sup> while Hopkins's can be seen adding the instructions for the prompter's bell.<sup>188</sup> The third hand is that which is found adding verses and altering individual lines,<sup>189</sup> and the fourth can be seen adding the Mrs Wrighten's name to the libretto.<sup>190</sup> Appendix I contains a complete analysis of the alterations.

When these alterations were made remains obscure. There is an example of at least one Garrick prompt book from this period that is a record of a production rather than a prompt copy that was used at the theatre. The relative tidiness of the annotations and their insertion in ink rather than in pencil, supports this view of *Alfred*. Against this is the use of the 1751 printed text as a primary text when the 1773 version was available, the fact that the main alterations to the masque had probably been made in 1771 when Garrick's letter to Hawkins was written and that any instructions

which were intended to be read by a prompter would, of necessity, be clear and neat. Further, it seems unlikely that some of the staging instructions that are found in Folger prompt A 10 would be inserted in a book that was a 'record' of the event. It is possible, though, that Hopkins's additions of the cast were added after the performances.

A probable chronology is as follows. When Garrick wrote to Hopkins in 1771, his initial thoughts had already been inserted into the libretto of 1751 - these consist of a few word alterations and the addition of some obvious material from earlier pieces such as the verses from 'Rule Britannia'. There is no evidence as to which Thomson version Garrick consulted, although small variations suggest it was probably not the 1766 Collected Works. The libretto was then put aside until 1773, when it was handed to an amanuensis, who added some lines from an earlier Thomson text. It was then handed to the prompter, who inserted all the stage directions for the production. The last additions, possibly made after the performances, consisted of the names of the cast.

Garrick's approach to any play text can be best gauged from a letter he wrote to Charles Macklin in 1769, while replying to some of the latter's criticisms of Garrick's *Shakespeare Ode*.<sup>121</sup> He continually cites great authorities such as Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden or Pope as the sources for his expression. He rejects out of date allusions and pays great attention to the clarity of the text. His other alterations consist of the introduction of dialogue to

heighten the stage action and small reworkings to incorporate extra characters.

The type of alterations Garrick made here can be seen in the comparative table, Appendix I. In the opening scene, for example, there is a re-allocation of dialogue to convert the character of Edith into a speaking as well as a singing part, and the 'improvement' of Corin's line by the alteration of 'But' to 'Come'. Garrick pays most attention to this opening scene, and to the third scene of Act III. In the former Garrick has re-instated dialogue and songs from the 1741 version and given the whole dramatic coherence, while in the latter, he has reworked scene iii to incorporate Edith and given Emma the new air 'Restore, good heaven, our gracious king'. Neither set of alterations radically alters the sense of the text, nor do they affect the plot of the masque.

However, not all the alterations made by Garrick and Hopkins found their way into the published text. Conversely, not all the alterations found in the published text can be found in Folger prompt A 10. Becket also published a book of songs and choruses from the masque for sale at the theatre which omits the music of scenes vi, vii and viii, and which clarifies the allocation of some of the music shown in Table III xi. It is probably the correct version of the music, for on 9 October it was advertised as

The Songs, Choruses, &c on the Masque (in the order they are now performed) to be had at the Theatre.<sup>192</sup>

Despite Garrick's own text then, we are no nearer to establishing

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exactly what was performed. What does emerge is that the libretto is derived from 1751, and not from 1740 or 1745, as Greene states.<sup>133</sup>

### The 1773 production and how it worked

The staging itself was a landmark in English theatrical history for it was Philip James De Loutherbourg's first full production. De Loutherbourg was a practising artist in Paris and moved to London in 1771. His Parisian work may have included set painting, for his introduction to Garrick was from Jean Monnet, the director of the Opéra-Comique. His style, with its European background, picked up aspects of Rowlandson and Gainsborough and, in about 1790, he produced several examples of early Anglo-German romanticism which have a theatrical feel about them - one such composition is 'A Philosopher in a Ruined Abbey'. In view of his later career, it is not surprising to find that his exhibits at the Paris salon in 1767 included battle pieces, marines and landscapes. He continued to paint in these genres for the remainder of his life, becoming historical painter to the Duke of Gloucester in 1807. Comments on De Loutherbourg's work by art historians cannot always be considered flattering. It has been described as 'stagey' and 'ingenious rather than artistic'.<sup>134</sup> He was apparently capable of painting 'anything he liked out of his head without referring back to nature'. While all the above are undesirable characteristics of a painter with pretensions, they are essential skills for any

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successful scene designer. And it is with the use of the term 'designer' that De Louthembourg's contribution to theatrical history can be encapsulated. Until the 1773-4 season at Drury Lane there were simply scene painters, the wardrobe and so on, all of whom did their job under the direction of the manager. De Louthembourg suggested that he should

...take care of all decorations, the machines dependent on them, the way of lighting and manipulating them, would devise scenes, produce every winter a beautiful play with grandiose effects mutually agreed upon, suggest appropriate costume, and prepare all novelties in the summer season so ample time would be had for executing them.<sup>195</sup>

As Sybil Rosenfeld has pointed out, this introduced an entirely new division of labour.<sup>196</sup> De Louthembourg seems never to have painted the scenes himself but employed the painters Thomas French, Thomas Greenwood and Pierre Royer to do the work. This necessitated the construction of the first maquettes, the small models of the stage design, from which the painters had then to work.

Apart from the artistic developments in scene painting - the increased use of natural settings, a greater variety of scenery, the consequent move away from formalism and symmetry - there were also changes in the way scenery was designed. De Louthembourg introduced the technique of breaking up the back flat, and bringing the resultant pieces in perspective. The flats themselves began to be cut into shapes of trees and other objects and greater use was made of the ground row. Each part of the set began to rely on asymmetry for much of its effect. Theatre lighting was greatly

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modified by the use of different coloured reflectors, front and back lighting, and the lighting of scenes from behind.

As *Alfred* was De Louthembourg's first production, not all his innovations are apparent.<sup>197</sup> His ethos depended on new scenery being created, rather than the somewhat haphazard re-use of the old; here, instructions found at the opening of Act II scene i, indicate that the flats, and probably the backdrop were reused from Garrick's *Lethe* first staged successfully in 1749. (see Table III xii *Landskip Hunt/O Lethe's/flat 3<sup>d</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> gr.*).<sup>198</sup>

The use of free standing scenery and the introduction of these pieces before the flats has already been mentioned. It is unclear from the annotations whether Emma and Corin's cottage in Act I scene i and the 'Hermit's Cell' in Act I scene ii were three dimensional or merely painted onto the flats, for the annotations give only the groove number in each case. The directions unfortunately peter out towards the end of the libretto, just at the point where the great naval scene is about to occur. The scene clearly opens to reveal

...the ocean in prospect, and ships sailing along. Two boats land their crews. One sailor sings the following Ode: after which the rest join in a lively dance.<sup>199</sup>

What we do know of this scene comes mostly from a short extract from the St James' Chronicle of October 1773.

The two lines of Men of War are not painted flat upon the Scenes, but are made with all their Rigging, Masts &c.<sup>200</sup>

Accounts for this season include a bill of £62 from the marine

artist John Thomas Serres who was employed by De Louthembourg especially to paint these.<sup>201</sup> The naval review was so successful (or perhaps so expensive) that it was introduced into *The Fair Quaker* on 9 November 1773.<sup>202</sup>

The machines which were used during the performance were cued by the famous prompter's bell (see Table III xiii). In Act I scene iv at the line 'As if some wing'd musician of the sky', Hopkins has added 'Ring for Cloud'. One assumes that he also rang for Mr Vernon for at the opening of scene v, the cloud appears to have been lowered and we find 'Vernon in the Cloud, the Chorus first Wing behind'. Unfortunately, there are no details of the ascent of the cloud, although Alfred's opening to scene vi 'Am I awake! and is it no illusion/That heaven thus designs to look with mercy on me?' implies that it disappears when the air is finished. Clouds were not always the safest of machines. In 1776, during a performance of *The Rival Candidates*, Hopkins's diary records that 'the whole set of Clouds fell down upon the Stage but did no Damage'.<sup>203</sup> The cloud is used at least once more during the masque and there is later mention of a sun (O Raise Carver & BB for the Sun), but there are no details of how these were manipulated.

There is only one lighting instruction, Cottage th/0 3<sup>rd</sup> gr./Stage dark. It is one that is not indicated by the libretto, but its brevity is unrevealing. We can only assume the stage was light at least by scene vii, when the sun appears.



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While the libretto reveals nothing about the costumes, the prompter was clearly in charge of organising the actors' preparations, for at the end of Act I, the tantalising instruction 'Dressing' can be found. The masque was clearly a foretaste of the wave of naturalism which would be felt in stage design during the next decade, for the advertisement tells us that it will be 'dress'd in the Habits of the times'.

Perhaps the most obvious annotation is the series of numbers in the margin of libretto. These are clearly a reminder to the prompter to summon the appropriate characters for the next scene. In Act II scene iv for example, call 7 summons Alfred, Corin and Eltruda. These characters are, however, not required on stage until scene vi. Only Alfred and Corin are listed at the opening of the scene, but, as is clear from a later annotation, Eltruda is required to provide a scream off-stage.

The lists of those to be called sometimes include the names of characters that do not appear in the printed text. For example, call 10 in Act II is for Corin and two children. While it is clear from the dialogue that *some* children are intended to be present, the call tells us how many Garrick expected to be there. Call 7 in Act I shows that there were three spirits involved, not the two required by the libretto. We later find them labelled by the prompter as 'Mrs Scott & Wrighten and Mrs Hunt', and numbered in the same hand as spirits two, one and three respectively.

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The stage entry instructions can be seen in full use in Act II scenes v to vii. At the line 'For after-times to visit and revere', 'a Shriek' is heard from stage left. (Prompt Side, abbreviated PS in the score; stage right is referred to as Opposite Prompt, abbreviated OP). Immediately Alfred asks 'What noise was that?', and we hear, still from within, 'Help! Help!'. The King exclaims

\_\_\_\_\_ By heaven  
The shrieks of women! Now stern vengeance guide  
The sword we draw.<sup>204</sup>

and exits (Ex) towards the cries on the stage left (PS). As he and Corin exit, Emma and the other peasants enter stage right (OP). Clearly, she faces towards stage left while she gives a commentary on the battle which is taking place off-stage. When it is over she exits (Ex), stage right (OP). Alfred, Corin and Eltruda enter stage left (PS).

This particular series of entries here casts some doubt on their veracity, for Emma's exit discussed above seems wholly inappropriate. She has seen her husband, the 'gallant shepherd' Corin, slay a Danish soldier in defence of an unknown woman and it is surely irrational to run off-stage unnecessarily in the opposite direction in his moment of victory. This feeling of dislocation is accentuated by the appearance of her husband stage left (PS) as she exits stage right. (OP)

By and large, the instructions here are relatively simple. Other Drury Lane prompt books from this period include instructions for the proscenium doors, and abbreviations for the different flats.

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There are only a few instructions here which are comparable. In Act I scene vii, for example, there is the annotation 'Enter 3 Spirits 2<sup>d</sup> Ent OP'. In other words, the spirits enter from behind the second flat, stage right. The following line reveals the position of the characters on the stage during the trio. Alfred stands stage left (P.S.), the spirits are grouped in the centre, while the Hermit is stage right (O.P.). That Smith's setting of this air is in three parts, clarifies the prompter's addition of the title 'trio'.

There is a range of incidental music cues contained in the libretto which I will not discuss in detail here, except to say that, although no music is extant for any of them, records of payments for most of the relevant performers survive. Further, the cues are so arranged as to suggest that there was a mechanical link between the prompter's box and the orchestra.

A consequence of De Louthembourg's innovations was a more flexible approach to staging.<sup>205</sup> The stage was usually empty at the end of scenes and, indeed, throughout this libretto the exit cues are all carefully marked. In Act II scene vii, however, while Alfred and the Hermit are on stage, the scene gradually opens 'to a grand flourish of instruments' to discover

...several triumphal arches, adorned with trophies and garlands, and from space to space, beautifully illuminated. The procession is led by shepherdesses, strewing flowers.<sup>206</sup>

This is accompanied by a march, presumably the 'March for the

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opening of the Grand Scene' which was amongst the music provided by Theodore Smith. 'The Procession of Alfred' enters. Alfred and Eltruda remain on stage as a forest is revealed for 'The Danish King's Procession', which is accompanied by a 'Dead March' (O Wood 2<sup>d</sup> gr). As soon as the soldiers move downstage, the shutters close hiding the wood from the audience. (As soon as the last/Soldiers are before/the 2<sup>d</sup> gr. Shut on O Wood & BB.). The Danish King and Alfred then proceed immediately into scene ix.

#### The music of 1773

The preparation of the score shows almost everyone concerned with the masque in an unflattering light. Garrick emerges as devious and a liar, Smith dilatory and Dibdin prickly; Arne's views are not recorded.<sup>207</sup> As shown above, the production was planned at least by 1771 and possibly earlier. Why Smith was chosen is unknown for *Alfred* was to be his first and last theatrical commission. Garrick may have been swayed by the skill and beauty of Smith's wife who performed in the production, and used her husband's commission as an incentive to persuade her to sing.<sup>208</sup> In any event Garrick, by going outside the house, snubbed both Dibdin and Arne; the latter does not appear even to have been consulted. Smith seems to have been slightly too relaxed about the commission, or perhaps failed to produce the style of song which Garrick required for on 6 October, three days before the first performance of the piece took place, a messenger was sent to Dibdin's house with a request to set

one of the texts. Dibdin's reply speaks for itself:

Oct 6.

Some Gentleman...call'd at my House today & left word, that he come from You, to desire I would set a Song for *Alfred*...as I should conceive it a most indelicate thing for any Man to introduce a Song of his in a piece which has been given to me...And as what is wanted cannot be of any Material Service to the piece, but would rather in everybody's opinion look as if I wanted to set myself against Mr Smith...I shall beg leave to decline.<sup>209</sup>

It seems, sadly, to have destroyed the already fragile relationship between the two men for, although the sense of Garrick's reply is not unreasonable, its manner is one calculated to give offence and his attempt to obscure the authorship of the new version which was already in rehearsal, and was about to be performed in the public theatre, is clumsy and inept:

October 6 [1773]

Sir

If I could be surpriz'd at anything Mr Dibdin does, I should think the inclos'd very Extraordinary; when I send for you I expect both from good manner & Duty, that you will come to me & know what I have to Say, before you will presume to answer it. - You are *our Composer*, & are not to do what *you* please; but what the *Managers* please - besides, supposing that what you write was true, Your memory prodigiously fails You: for you compos'd Songs in *Cymon* & in other things - besides *Alfred* is not Mr Smith's Composition, but Dr Arnes &c I am very glad your Delicacy is so refin'd, & I hope your Nice Morality will Continue not only to Save your self labour, but to behave Justly and Consistently - I am afraid you begin to learn how to behave to me from some of your Friends - but I shall send to You no more - I must desire You to send me the Collection of Songs You have of Mine, I want to see them together - I am oblig'd to You for your opinion of what will be of Service or not, but as I have not yet given up the Management, You must excuse me for not following your opinion; As I think the Letter is such a one I ought not to receive I here sent [sic] it back. I am Sir,

Yours &c  
D. Garrick<sup>210</sup>

As Table III xiv shows, the music provided by Smith included a new overture, five new songs, a march and, it appears from the accounts and annotations in Folger prompt A 10, the small amount of incidental music listed in Table III xx.

Burnim refers to *Alfred* as one of a series of spectacles.<sup>211</sup>

Garrick was clearly enthusiastic about the whole enterprise, but sadly, although the masque seems to have been well received, the final verdict, found in an entry in the Drury Lane prompter's diary for 9 October 1773, did not differ from that passed on the 1751 performances:

This Masque is very well got up with New Scenes and Decorations particularly a Representation of the Grand Naval Review design'd by Mons De Louthenberg & vastly well Executed had great Applause the piece is very dull.<sup>212</sup>

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### The genesis of the music

As the reader will by now suspect, consideration of the genesis and chronology of the music is not a straightforward matter. Among the physical factors which need to be taken into account is that there is not one complete setting which relates to any surviving libretto; that, taking into account that a libretto may not represent what happened in the theatre, none of the settings appear to be complete in themselves; that there is no relevant manuscript material; and that the settings by Burney and Smith survive only in short score.

The context of Arne's music for the 1740 version of the masque and the way he approached the texts have been discussed above. All the music of this score exists, with the exception of one air and the symphony of martial music, although it can only be located in sources and arrangements associated with later settings of the work.<sup>213</sup>

Arne's desire in 1740 was to provide a group of simple strophic songs appropriate to the pastoral setting of both the masque and the performance, and one in which the words could be easily understood. Their chief charm lay in their melodies; a clear elegant, unaffected style in short verses with little melismatic writing, and short instrumental introductions. The modulations are to closely related keys, and frequently relate to subtleties in the

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text, as for example in 'Sweet Valley' (see *MB*, xlvii, 36-7). The style Arne used here was the one with which he had already caught the public's imagination in *Comus* of 1738.<sup>214</sup> There would have been no room here for the elaborate Italianate style he was to employ in 1753.

While the original instrumentation and scoring is unknown, an hypothesis about its scale can be advanced. Fiske claims that Arne's scoring was lavish and that the orchestra at Cliveden was probably lavish to match.<sup>215</sup> However, the discussion by Fiske regarding the 'reduction' of the overture starts from a false premise; there is no overture required for 1740, nor, indeed, is one specified in any Arne libretto until that of 1753; this is the music that Fiske cites and clearly it has no relevance here.<sup>216</sup>

The surviving settings really point to a quite small string band, with a single flute and a single trumpet. The flute is required in 'Sweet valley' and the trumpet is mentioned in the libretto - '... after which a single trumpet sounds a high and awakening air'.<sup>217</sup> The flute is also a candidate for the single line otherwise ascribed to two oboes in the surviving setting of 'Hear Alfred, Father of the State' (see *MB* xlvii, 82). The trumpet would have been quite acceptable in such a small scale work to provide the martial feel in the lost 'Symphony of martial music' and was probably used in 'Rule Britannia'. It is also significant that this last is the only original piece existing the grandiose setting to which Fiske refers, and is an air which Arne is known to have re-

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scored.<sup>218</sup> If this small band was used in 1740, the proposition that the amphitheatre at Cliveden would have been too small to accommodate the orchestra and singers has no foundation.<sup>219</sup>

As has been discussed above, there is no evidence to show that music was ever written for the text of 1741. There is, in any case, only provision for two more airs, a chorus and some short choral interjections in Act III, the rest of the numbers being supplied from 1740.

Only four of the thirteen airs newly written for the 1745 version survive and, in the absence of the 1744 Dublin libretto, it seems safe to give 1745, the year of the first London performance, as the latest possible date for their composition. Three of these airs - 'Arise ye messenger of morn', 'Observe the fragrant blushing rose' and 'Tho' to a desert isle confin'd' - are in the same simple style and have the same forms associated with the music Arne composed in 1740. However, the existing version of 'Why beats my heart with such devotion' has some stylistic oddities which suggest that it may have been altered at a later date; the melismatic passage from bars 57 to 64 was possibly added when Arne was composing the 1753 version, probably with the singer Guadagni in mind (see *MB*, xlvii, 40).

This brings us to Arne's 1753 score. There seems to be little new about the forms of the new music added here, with the exception of the *da capo* arias. I would like to suggest that their addition was

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due entirely to the fact that Arne was writing this version for a Benefit concert with the fore-knowledge of who was to be singing the parts, and that the grander *da capo* forms and more elaborate music reflected the calibre of those singers.<sup>220</sup>

The printed cast list gives Alfred - Mr Beard, Eltruda - Signora Frasi, Prince Edward - Signor Guadagni, Corin - Mr Baker, Emma - Signora Galli, Edith - Miss Young and a Spirit - Mrs Arne. John Beard (1716?-1791) was one of the most popular and accomplished tenors of this period, singing all the major roles including those in Handel's oratorios.<sup>222</sup> Another Handel singer, Signora Frasi (fl 1742-1772), had joined the opera company at the Haymarket in 1742 and had 'a remarkably clear voice'. The last of the three 'greats' is the castrato Gaetano Guadagni (c1725-1792), who had come to England with the Italian burletta company in 1748 and had remained in London singing, like Beard and Frasi, in Handel's oratorios.

Of the remaining singers, Thomas Baker (fl 1745-1785?), Cecilia Arne (nee Young; 1711-1789) and Esther Young were *Alfred* regulars, and Signora Galli (1723-1804), one of Handel's earliest students, was usually to be found performing for the benefit of 'Decay'd Musicians' in the early 1750s.

We owe the survival of most of the music of the 1753 setting to its publication by Walsh sometime during the 1750s, but the actual chronology of the publication and performances and the matter of the second issue both remain obscure.<sup>222</sup> The volume is in full

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score but, as might be expected, lacks the recitatives, choruses and the incidental music.

The layout of the cast in the printed score, placing the first three singers at the top regardless of sex, is indicative of their importance and they were a breed apart from those pleasant but technically unexacting singers whom he had employed in past performances of *Alfred*. It is not surprising therefore that, of the five new elaborate *da capo* arias, two were for Beard, two were for Guadagni and one was for Signora Frasi; Guadagni also seems to have been given the altered version of 'Why beats my heart with such devotion?' described above. Furthermore, the new trio 'Let not those who love complain', with its enormously long ritornelli and extended melismatic writing, was set for these three singers in the characters of Alfred, Edward and Eltruda respectively.

Act II scene ii becomes a musical extravaganza, with the three *da capo* arias 'Gracious heav'n O hear me', 'Vengeance, O come inspire me' and 'Tho' storms awhile the sun obscure' coming in sequence, leading to the funeral dirge, for

Arne, after all, was composing for a public that  
wanted a lot of arias and not much recitative.<sup>229</sup>

There can be little doubt that Arne produced for this benefit what might be described as a 'singer's opera', with music designed to take advantage of the high concentration of outstanding performers which he knew would be available for the event. Scott's suggestion

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that Arne reserved the *da capo* aria for Royal characters does not explain its omission from earlier versions of the work.<sup>224</sup>

As far as the arias themselves are concerned, no two have exactly the same structure. The more usual form of A is that shown in Table III xv, where A1 and A2 are full statements of the text including small internal repeats. A2 is always longer than A1, being extended by italianate melismatic writing. However, in the case of 'Gracious Heav'n, O hear me', there are two statements of the text in each of A1 and A2. The dominant is reached during A1i, and remains in that key for the central ritornello; A2i returns to the tonic. In 'Though storms awhile the sun obscure', there are three full statements of the text interspersed by ritornelli. The key structure and the gradual lengthening of the A section can be seen in Table III xvi. The initial entry in each of the arias is in the tonic, with the opening material first being stated in the ritornello. Again allowing for internal repeats, the B section of 'Gracious Heav'n, O hear me!', 'Vengeance, O come inspire me!' and 'See liberty, virtue and honour appearing' have one statement of the text, while 'From the dawn of early morning' and 'Though storms awhile the sun obscure' have two. However, regardless of the organization of the melodic line, there is, in all cases, only a single statement of the music. The internal organization of the text of both the A and B sections varies from aria to aria and there is no indication that Arne preferred to set any particular length or metre.

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This A-B-A *da capo* structure described above is not varied or broken to highlight the drama, as in such well known Handelian examples as 'V' adoro, pupille' in *Giulio Cesare* or 'A serpent in my bosom warm'd' from *Saul*. However, varying the *da capo* does not really become an issue, for the variety of musical forms employed by Arne means the possibility of surprise, claimed by many to be the point of such exceptions to the rule, is lacking.

Few *da capo* arias appear in Arne's works before or after this date. In a work as important as the *Judgment of Paris* for example, there are only two, together with a large *da capo* trio. In fact, the *Judgment of Paris* exemplifies Arne's propensity for using a variety of forms, a propensity not unlike Handel's approach in the second part of *Alexander's Feast*. As well as the three *da capo* pieces mentioned above, the masque includes an unusual tenor duet, some interesting accompanied recitative, one or two strophic airs and the attractive air with 'cello obligato, 'Gentle swain! Hither turn thee'. As Ian Spink remarks, the work is a combination of elements of the English and Italian styles, and also shows influence of Ballad opera. Musically one of Arne's most attractive works, this earlier masque shows an ability to pace the music very well indeed, an ability that is completely obscured in the 1753 version of *Alfred*; this is probably because the adaptation of this latter libretto was his own, rather than the work of a competent librettist.

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Arne's later *opera seria*, *Artaxerxes* (1762), is a work in which the form might be expected to appear. It does not, however, and the fact that the title page calls it an 'English Opera' may well indicate that it is necessarily absent.

The overture is tripartite and is quite different from that which Smith was to add in 1773. It remains firmly in the three movement form favoured by composers since the early eighteenth century and consists of an *Allegro moderato*, an *Andante* and a Minuet. Although Cudworth suggests that it is an attempt at sonata form, there is no real subject and the only significant material introduced after the first ritornello is the two beat figure in bar 37, the second half of which is, in any case, taken from bar 17 of the second oboe line ritornello.<sup>225</sup> The andante closes with a short largo section, which leads to the *tempo di minuetto*.

The overall key structure of the 1753 score, illustrated in Table III xvii, suggests some interesting possibilities. It is one that moves from an emphasis on flat and minor keys to sharp and major ones, and whether it be a co-incidence or not, the turning points are always those arias sung by Eltruda. For example, in Act I she introduces the first sharp key, b minor, with the air 'Sweet Valley, say, where pensive lying'. (see *MB*, xlvii, 36). This delicate air, one which appears in each of the Arne versions, is scored for flute and basso continuo. It would be disingenuous not to suggest here that Arne may have chosen this light scoring not to highlight Eltruda's love, but because the whole air is sung by the

singer while the character is backstage. However, Eltruda is in search of Alfred and the flute represents her love for her husband who is lost to her, her children and to England. The flute and Eltruda's vocal line work in dialogue and the flute imitates her sighing and her sorrow - emphasised by an upper appoggiatura - her request to be led by the brook to Alfred's bed, and the whisper she hopes will reveal him to her. Arne plays with the whispering figure, turning it into a delicate triplet echo in the only textual repeat in the air.

As well as introducing the first sharp key in the act, 'Sweet Valley' forms the pivotal point both tonally and dramatically. While both F and B flat have preceded it, the keys for the remainder of the act are major and, excluding C, all sharp. The meeting between Eltruda and Alfred, which occurs immediately after the air, lifts their morale and paves the way for Alfred and Edward to wrest control of England from the Danes.

The two remaining key shifts are both in Act II. The first, is foreshadowed by Edith in 'A youth adorn'd with every art'. (see *MB*, xlvii, 62). The abrupt change of pace in the second half - Andante to slow - and the simultaneous key change - E to e - reflects the change from a shrill, desperate outlining of her lover's virtues, to his death in battle. As Eltruda remarks on her following entry,

The unrelenting, iron-hand of war  
Has crush'd the cottage with the lofty palace.<sup>226</sup>

Her cry is for peace - 'O peace thou fairest child of heaven' - and

until there is hope that this might be achieved, Arne's music hovers around the minor and the major flat keys. The second is the *da capo* aria 'Gracious heav'n O hear me' and is Eltruda's spirited call upon heaven to help them drive the Danes from Britain. (see MB, xlvii, 85). It is preceded by 'Hear, Alfred, Father of the State', in which the first spirit gives Alfred heart. 'Gracious heaven' is Eltruda's response to Alfred's recovery of spirits, and leads directly to his plan to rally the troupes to attack the Danish camp. The remainder of the masque is now predominantly in major keys - the short 'Honour comes, a pilgrim grey' and the B sections of two *da capo* arias are the few exceptions - and the music sweeps triumphantly on to conclude with 'When Britain first at heav'n's command'.

The one remaining piece of Arne's music which can be associated with *Alfred* is the new setting of 'O what joys does conquest yield', included in the 1759 oratorio version of the masque. (see MB, xlvii, 164). Although Scott's opinion of this piece as 'rather facile music' in 'Arne's later style' is harsh, it has to be admitted that it is not as effective a setting as that of the original.<sup>227</sup>

Generally, Alexander Scott's view of the 1753 version of *Alfred* as a 'transitional' work is not a tenable one.<sup>228</sup> This would imply that Arne's revisions were undertaken with the aim of perfecting a product. However, each revision was for a specific musical end and as far as can be determined, for a specific performance, and each



was and is an entity in its own right. Certainly, 1753 does not represent Arne's 'final thoughts' concerning *Alfred*, but it does represent his final thoughts on *that particular version*. It is misleading to speak of 'final thoughts' since there are none; if Arne had not died in 1778 there would be several more settings of the masque to consider.

Although it has been pointed out on several occasions that Arne's score survives incomplete and in scattered sources, and it is true that this makes it difficult to assess, the fact remains that the work was important to Arne and was regarded by him as one of his major compositions.<sup>229</sup> It demonstrates his desire to please, to produce music which would appeal to the public by making few demands on their emotions and their concentration and, above all, music which, if successful, would guarantee him commissions from the London theatres.

There are two other versions to be discussed. The first that music written by Charles Burney under the pseudonym of 'The Society of the Temple of Apollo' and the second is the score prepared by Theodore Smith for Garrick's 1773 performances.

As Arne's previously quoted advertisement shows, two of the airs required by the 1751 libretto were still performed in his settings - 'O peace the fairest child of heaven' and 'When Britain first at heav'n's command'. Mallet seems to have interfered somewhat in the composition of the music, for Burney tells us that:

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The poet [Mallet] wanted the words of all the songs to be adapted to old Scotch tunes. I indulged him in 2 or 3; but as Alfred was not a Scotsman, I thought it w<sup>d</sup> be ridiculous to confine all the Songs to scotish melody. I therefore new set all the rest except "Rule Britannia", w<sup>ch</sup> had been so happily set by my Master Arne, that I very early in life thought it the most pleasing, and the best song that ever was produced by a native of England in our language.<sup>230</sup>

This private view did not prevent Burney from providing a new setting of a text to replace 'When Britain first at heav'n's command', an uninteresting and somewhat tedious piece which seems not to have been used in the performances. It was, however, included as part of the contents of the printed score, published under the authorship of the Society for the Temple of Apollo which is listed in Table III xviii.<sup>231</sup> Of the '2 or 3' Scots tunes, one is that to which the words of 'In cooling stream, o sweet repose' are set. Burney claims it to be the work of David Rizzio; but Hawkins points out that it was included by William Thomson in his *Orpheus Caledonius*; this was published in 1726.<sup>232</sup> The rest remain unidentified but, like the 'Pinky House' tune, were probably taken from eighteenth-century printed collections.

The orchestration supplied by Burney is lavish when compared, say, to the 1740 version for it requires two flutes, two oboes, two bassoons, two horns, trumpet, timpani, side drum, the usual strings and a cembalo. The way in which Burney uses the instruments reveals two different approaches to setting the masque. One approach is that found in the group of large scale airs - 'Hear Alfred, father of the state', 'The shepherd's plain life', 'Swell the trumpet's boldest note', 'We have fought and we have conquered' and the short

choruses - which use various combinations of the wind and percussion instruments with strings. Of these instruments, it is only the flute that is used elsewhere, appearing in an individual line above doubled violins in 'Arise sweet messenger of morn'. All these large scale airs were sung by or involved John Beard, the distinguished tenor mentioned above. The smaller scale airs - 'O peace, the fairest child of heaven', 'A youth adorn'd with ev'ry art', 'Ye woods and ye mountains unknown', 'In cooling stream, O sweet repose', 'From those eternal regions bright', 'Arise, sweet messenger of morn' and 'At last, at last our night is past' - use only strings, and are sung by Elizabeth Norris, Kitty Clive or Master Vernon. That John Beard also sang a small air, does not negate the proposition that Burney's grandiose arias took advantage of Beard's polished and stylish manner of performance.

The form of most of the airs is essentially AA, with an opening and closing ritornello. There is one small through composed air - 'O peace, the fairest child of heaven' - and one ternary aria organised in an unsophisticated *da capo* form. The tunes, too, are unsophisticated - there is little melismatic writing and, although Burney may have taken advantage of Beard's voice to the extent of pitting it against a full orchestra, he does not exploit Beard's talent as Arne was to do in 1753.

Smith's music for the 1773 version survives only in printed short score and contains settings of the numbers listed on Table III xix.<sup>233</sup> Given the circumstances, it is no surprise that so many of

the printed numbers involve Smith's wife. Of the texts that Smith retained from earlier versions it is the Arne settings from the 1740 version that have been dropped. The music of the arias that Smith set afresh - 'If those who live in shepherd's bower', 'Hear Alfred, father of the state' and 'Sweet Valley' - was clearly too old fashioned by the late eighteenth century.

Smith's commitment to the emerging classical style is evident. The form of the arias that Smith provided is typical of the later eighteenth century: a single movement with a tonal plan not dissimilar to that of the sonata. It opens in the tonic, modulates to the dominant with a statement of the principal material, uses this initially as a type of development section in the middle, and then returns to a tonic via the remaining phrases. Smith's use of the form, as outlined above, falls between the decline of the fashionable *dal segno* aria and, its later, more clear cut state, where the middle section takes on more characteristics of a classical development. All the arias open with an instrumental statement containing a truncated version of the opening material; they close with a version of the last few bars of the introduction. Arias such as 'If those who live in shepherd's bower' repeat the single movement; the two elaborate bravura pieces - 'Joy of joys to lighten woe' and 'Restore, O heav'n thy gracious king' - are in AA' form.

The independence of the vocal line and the orchestral material, and the assurance with which Smith was able to work both these parts,

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is the result of the underlying tonal structure of the aria with its greater emphasis on tonic-dominant relationships, relationships which played such a key role in the creation of the Viennese style. Other indications of contemporary stylistic developments are evident in most arias. In 'Hear Alfred, father of the state', for example, they can be found in the broad melody against a pizzicato Alberti pattern, in the rising staccato orchestral phrases, in its detailed dynamics and in the manipulation of a host of melodic and rhythmic devices indicative of the Mannheim style, a style which had strongly influenced composers of Smith's generation. (see Example III 1).

The overture is in the truncated A(ab)/A' (a'b') form and has clearly identifiable contrasting first and second subjects, but although said to be in 'impeccable sonata form', there is no development.<sup>234</sup>

The quality of Smith's music is variable and tends to be grandiose in title rather than in reality. For example, the so-called trio 'Joy of joys to lighten woe' proves to be a single verse of four couplets, set as two stanzas of two couplets in solo and verse. The opening two couplets are set as an air for Mrs Wrighten; the second half simply repeats the opening music in the same voice and by some elementary doubling and tripling of the line, Smith creates the second and third voices.

The work's survival in short score limits the details of orchestration that are available. The score has printed indications for two flutes, one oboe (it is labelled '1', which suggests that there were probably two), two violins, viola and basso. It is clear from the payments of accounts, however, that the theatre orchestra was enlarged for the performances. On 25 October, the treasurer's book records a payment of £18.7s.6d for two extra clarinets, two horns and a bassoon for seven out of the eight performances.<sup>235</sup>

A further payment made on 18 October listed in the Treasurer's book is that to 'Mr Cooke's Boys in *Alfred* 7th night (18th incl) £19.10s'.<sup>236</sup> Benjamin Cooke's boys appeared frequently at Drury Lane during this period: see, for example, the masque *The Institution of the Garter* in 1771.<sup>237</sup> Although no chorus is mentioned in the libretto, the manuscript stage directions in Folger prompt A.10 added to Act I scene v, allocate verses in the air 'Hear, Alfred Father of the state' to them. This chorus of spirits, off-stage and unseen, seems to be the only appropriate place for a group of boys in such a production.

The annotations to Folger prompt A.10 shown in Table III xx, also suggest that there was more music by Smith than was published or listed in the 1773 printed libretto. In Act I, the instruction 'Solemn music is heard at a distance. It comes near in a full symphony: after which a single trumpet sounds a high and awakening air, Then the following stanzas are sung by two aërial spirits'.<sup>238</sup> After this has been added 'Air for a Single Trumpet' which has then

been crossed out. The cancellation of this seems to be because it was incorrectly entered after the text of the air, which it was clearly designed to precede. This indication is found in many of the previous *Alfred* libretti, but this annotation, and the payments cited below, are the first concrete evidence that music was ever provided for this passage. Other incidental trumpet music can be found in Act III scene iii where 'Trumpets sound' appears against 'Thy song ... suspended my affliction for a moment - Ha! hear'st thou not, the Trumpets distant voice?',<sup>239</sup> and in Act III scene vi where the line 'That trumpet speaks' has a cross marked against it.<sup>240</sup> Payments relating to this extra trumpet are confusing. On 25 October the treasurer paid an extra trumpet £2.12s.6d for seven nights in *Alfred*.<sup>241</sup> On 28 December, in what seems to have been an excess of generosity, he paid 'Mr Jenkins Ext Trumpet 8 nights in *Alfred* £4.4s'.<sup>242</sup> There were only a total of eight performances and nothing can be found to explain this anomaly. The payments as cited above imply that while the extra trumpet in the masque was used in all eight performances, the last performance had smaller orchestral forces and lacked Benjamin Cooke's boys.

The remaining manuscript indications of incidental music are those in Acts I and III. In Act I scene iv, as Alfred pronounces 'Why beats my bosom? X Shield me heaven', a chord is heard from the orchestra. Several lines later, at 'Whence should it come? X Hark! - now the measur'd strains in awful sweetness', a strain is played. It is not clear whether some additional music was used; the opening of the Solemn Music would have been dramatically appropriate. In

Act III, after the battle has been won, the defeated Danish king is brought to Alfred. At Alfred's line 'ELTRUDA, see, whence comes th' unhappy king!', three strains of a 'Dead March' are heard.<sup>243</sup> This leads to the ultimate appearance of the 'Danish King's Procession' which is accompanied by the whole of the piece.<sup>244</sup>

Although Smith clearly arranged that the orchestra played in the appropriate places, it is not clear exactly how much music he composed. Much of it, such as the trumpet sounding on high or the single strain, could have either been improvised by the player in question, or been taken from airs close by. The one piece obviously missing is, unfortunately, the Dead March for the Danish king.

#### *Alfred* : an overall view

The discussion above of the versions of the masque of *Alfred*, has considered the role of the three principal figures who, in both public and private, championed the work. Their ideals are reflected in the character of the different texts, be it in the words or in the music. The relationship between the libretti is shown in Table III xxi.

The first group consists of the two libretti which relate directly to James Thomson - the 1740 printed libretto and the expanded manuscript text of 1741. The 1741 text uses nearly all the material from 1740 and omits only the symphony of martial music. The use of

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spoken dialogue in these two versions reflects the desire to communicate a detailed political message of which the simplicity of the setting and the action are part.

Thereafter, the libretti divide into two groups which reflect quite different pre-occupations and concerns and which have independent chronologies. That which starts in 1745 consists of those associated with Thomas Arne, who used the masque primarily as a vehicle for his own music and for singers to whom he had access on particular occasions. In Dublin in 1744, his wife Cecilia Lampe was present, as she was in London in 1745 and 1753. In the latter performance, Arne also had a number of Handelian singers - John Beard, Giulia Frasi, Gaetano Gudagni and Caterina Galli - and took the opportunity to include a large amount of elaborate Italianate music. These versions were intended to be staged, although in the case of 1745 we know from Burney that this desire was not achieved.

Latterly, Arne resorted to oratorio versions, preparing one libretto (1759) based directly on 1753, another (1760?) which appears to have been an attempt at a definitive text and a two act version (1762) which seems to have been a last ditch attempt to establish the work, this time as an afterpiece. It is significant that all of the Arne versions were given as benefits either for himself or for others.

The other group of libretti consists of those of 1751 and 1773 which are related to David Garrick. They incorporated Arne's

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popular songs but the scores were altered and reset by Burney and Smith, composers who were favoured by Garrick at the time. The Garrick versions had a majority of speaking parts, making the work a spoken masque with incidental music, and they contained elaborate scenic devices.

The proportion of singing to spoken parts in the different versions can be seen in Table III xxi. The table also shows clearly how small the versions of the masque associated with Thomson are. The Arne versions have a majority of sung parts and are small scale works, involving little expenditure. The remaining libretti, however, show an extravagant use of chorus and minor characters which were required to provide the spectacles that Garrick needed to satisfy the public's expectations.

The chequered career of the later versions of *Alfred* then, is a testament to two men's ambitions. All the evidence suggests that the reasons for its continual revival as a theatre piece was solely a matter of personal preference, rather than any serious attempt to provide a new or more attractive work for the public.

It was, according to the press, rapturously received on each occasion that the work was performed. Yet there is not one serious judgment advanced by any contemporary critic, scholar or amateur which is favorable: a piece to 'be read with great labour of the brain' remarked Elizabeth Montagu;<sup>245</sup> 'the whole conduct of the piece is incorrect' wrote Frances, Countess of Pomfret;<sup>246</sup>

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sentiments that 'would have been dull at D.L.' commented Genest;<sup>247</sup> 'the piece is very dull' chronicled Hopkins;<sup>248</sup> and, worst of all, 'there was not company sufficient to pay the expenses' noted Burney.<sup>249</sup>

What made it sufficiently popular to encourage this continual activity was the inclusion of 'Rule Britannia' in every version, a song which had captured the imagination of the people long after the political ideas behind the piece had become irrelevant - Genest could quite legitimately call the third act of the masque, 'a compliment to George 2d', a statement that would have paled the cheeks of the authors of the 1740 version, had they heard it.<sup>250</sup>

The work's attraction was too rarefied for a prolonged run at either of the patent theatres, its music had not the same quality or appeal as that of *Comus*, it did not establish itself as an afterpiece (somewhat surprisingly, in view of 'Rule Britannia') and it lacked the force of more conventional drama. The work, after all, languished 'for want of what the stage calls action'.<sup>249</sup>

It is true that, as a piece of theatre, it could be said that

the synthesis of the historical action, the landscape setting, and the wider historical progress or prospect was an ambitious project never fully achieved.<sup>252</sup>

but as a masque, such a synthesis would merely obscure vital points of the performance. However, the masquing conventions of presentation and ideas, rather than action and drama, was not a combination to appeal to a general theatre audience. Perhaps, in

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truth, *Alfred* was representative of a genre of masque writing with which such an audience had no familiarity, small understanding, and little interest.

